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### From Hades to the stars

**Citation for published version:**

Trepanier, S 2017, 'From Hades to the stars: Empedocles on the cosmic habitats of soul' *Classical Antiquity*, vol. 36, no. 1, pp. 130-182.

**Link:**

[Link to publication record in Edinburgh Research Explorer](#)

**Document Version:**

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

**Published In:**

*Classical Antiquity*

**Publisher Rights Statement:**

Published as Trépanier, S. 2017. From Hades to the Stars: Empedocles on the Cosmic Habitats of Soul, *Classical Antiquity*, Vol. 36 No. 1, April 2017; (pp. 130-182) DOI: 10.1525/ca.2017.36.1.130.

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## From Hades to the Stars: Empedocles on the Cosmic Habitats of Soul

καὶ πῶς τις ἀνάξει αὐτοὺς εἰς φῶς, ὥσπερ  
ἐξ Ἅιδου λέγονται δὴ τινες εἰς θεοὺς ἀνελθεῖν;  
Plato *Republic* 521c

This study reconstructs Empedocles' eschatology and cosmology, arguing that they presuppose one another. Part one surveys body and soul in Empedocles and argues that the transmigrating *daimon* is a long-lived compound made of the elements air and fire. Part two shows that Empedocles situates our current life in Hades, then considers the testimonies concerning different cosmic levels in Empedocles and compares them with the afterlife schemes in Pindar's Second *Olympian Ode* and Plato's *Phaedo* myth. Part three offers a new edition of *section d* lines 5–10 of the Strasbourg papyrus of Empedocles that reinforces the connection between transmigration and different cosmic locations for souls. Part four reconstructs Empedocles' cosmology, identifies three different levels or habitats of soul, and, more tentatively, suggests that Empedoclean "long-lived gods" are best understood as stars.

### INTRODUCTION: THE UNITY OF EMPEDOCLES' THOUGHT

This paper is the continuation of a larger project devoted to the reconstruction of Empedocles' thought.<sup>1</sup> Its focus is Empedocles' cosmic eschatology, his answer

My first thanks are to the editors of *Classical Antiquity*, Mark Griffith and Leslie Kurke (the former was extremely generous to me with time and advice), and to the anonymous readers of the journal. For comments and help I would also like to thank Jean-Claude Picot and the audiences of earlier versions of this study at St-Andrews, Edinburgh, Austin, Brasilia, and Trier. For the pictures in Figure 1, I thank Thomas Bonnin and Jean-Pierre Rosenkranz of the Bibliothèque Nationale et Universitaire de Strasbourg (BNU), and, for help with an earlier visit to Strasbourg in order to look at the papyrus, Daniel Bornemann also of the BNU.

1. Most recently Trépanier 2014 and 2018a. References to Empedocles follow the numbering from Diels-Kranz, 5th ed., 1934–1937, henceforth DK. Any additional material is listed as in the

to the question “Where do we go when we die?” Because of the complexity of the evidence, some of it new, the argument will unfold in stages. Part one reviews Empedocles on soul and argues that the identification of the transmigrating *daimon* of B 115 with the soul found in our Platonist sources is correct enough, pending some important qualifications. Part two argues that Empedocles identifies this, our current earthly life, as Hades, then examines the ancient testimonies for his levels-of-life scheme alongside other historical parallels, most importantly the *Phaëdo* myth and Pindar’s Second *Olympian Ode*. Part three offers a new edition of the papyrus lines dealing with transmigration and cosmic levels, and argues that the papyrus refers back to fragment B 115. Part four reconstructs Empedocles’ cosmology as the setting for his eschatology, based on doxographic testimonies and select fragments, and then, more tentatively, investigates the possibility of astral apotheosis in Empedocles.

Before I begin my positive case, it will be useful to make a few preliminary remarks on the difficulties presented by the Empedoclean corpus. I start with two framework questions, the debate on the number of original works and the unity of Empedocles’ thought. After that I will say a few words concerning the literary format of the material and the challenges it presents. Outlining these issues, it is hoped, will not only make the paper easier to follow but will also provide some useful orientation for readers less familiar with Empedocles.

We can start with the debate on the number of works. Although most of our ancient sources of Empedoclean fragments quote Empedocles by simply reporting “Empedocles says” without naming a work, when our sources do specify a work, we find two titles associated with Empedocles’ poetic output. The title *On Nature*, *Περὶ φύσεως*, or in later sources *Physics*, *τὰ Φυσικά*, is associated with the greater number of fragments, including those that overlap with the new Strasbourg papyrus. But a number of sources also quote material from the *Purifications*, *οἱ Καθαρμοί*.<sup>2</sup> Based on these two titles, the traditional reconstruction of the corpus, as found in Diels-Kranz and still followed by the majority of recent editors, posits that the two titles denote two separate works. The alternative, which I favor, holds that despite these two titles, all our fragments in fact belong to one work, which either went under alternative titles or perhaps one long title.<sup>3</sup>

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edition of Viték 2006. For the testimonies or A series I have also consulted the edition of Aëtius Book II in Mansfeld and Runia 2009. For the Strasbourg papyrus, unless noted I quote from the *editio princeps* by Martin and Primavesi 1999, henceforth M-P.

2. For a table of all known references to both titles, including book numbers, see Trépanier 2004: 8–9.

3. The question turns on a diverse collection of evidence such as the titles themselves, the correlation between these titles and the content of the named passages, including whether that content is directed to a single addressee or to a group (Pausanias for the *On Nature*; the “friends from Acragas” for the *Purifications*) and so on. The most prominent cases for the single work are Osborne 1987a, Inwood 2001 (incorporating the papyrus; 1st ed. 1992) and Trépanier 2004. The only ancient author to mention both titles in something like a single context is Diogenes Laertius 8.77: *Τὰ μὲν οὖν Περὶ φύσεως αὐτῷ καὶ οἱ Καθαρμοί εἰς ἓπι τείνουσι πεντακισχίλια*, “The material on nature and

A second question, related to but not identical with the first, is the debate on the unity of Empedocles' thought. Ever since Zeller's mid-nineteenth-century critique of Empedocles in volume I of *Die Philosophie der Griechen in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung*, scholars have struggled to see how Empedocles' commitment to a transmigrating soul can be squared with his materialist, elemental physics. For the rest of the nineteenth and the much of the twentieth century, many thought that this incompatibility actually supported the two-work reconstruction, on the grounds that Empedocles as well must have recognized the clash between religion (the *Purifications*) and science (the *On Nature*), whose claims he could have championed at different stages of his life. By the second half of the twentieth century, however, the notion that Empedocles will have made a clear-cut distinction between religion and science was no longer felt to be self-evident or even plausible, so that a single work reconstruction of the corpus became conceivable.<sup>4</sup>

This was more or less the situation when, in 1999, the Strasbourg papyrus of Empedocles opened a new era in Empedoclean studies. At a stroke, the papyrus gave us dramatic confirmation of the unity of Empedocles' thought: at section **d** lines 5–6 Empedocles punctuates an account of the origins of life with a cry of despair at his meat-eating sins. The case for doctrinal unity appears all the stronger for the fact that section **a**, the largest continuous section of the papyrus, overlaps with and continues fragment B 17, Empedocles' main exposition of the cosmic cycle, a passage securely identified as belonging to Book I of the *On Nature* by its source, the Aristotelian commentator Simplicius. Thus, even on the assumption of two works, the *On Nature* must have contained material on transmigration, and the unity of Empedocles' thought follows.<sup>5</sup>

With respect to these two framework questions, in this study I will take it for granted that the second, the unity of Empedocles' thought, is henceforth

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the *Purifications* extend to about five thousand hexameters." To put the case for the single work in two nutshell: 1) If Diogenes thinks that there were two works, why does he give us their *combined* line numbers? Maybe he thinks they are a single long or descriptive title. 2) Is it really just luck that the *On Nature* is relatively well preserved, save for its opening sections, while the *Purifications* is much more poorly attested, except that in B 112 we have its very opening? More economical possibilities spring to mind.

4. Kahn 1960/1993 especially argued forcefully that the *On Nature* is no less of a supernatural revelation than the *Purifications*. But the question was never entirely closed.

5. Against the modern perception of a clash between science and religion, a number of passages from Aristotle imply that in the Classical period Empedocles had a general reputation for, and was esteemed precisely on account of, the coherency of his thought. See for example *Metaphysics* B 1000a25: "But even he, whom one would most expect to speak consistently, Empedocles. . ." (καὶ γὰρ ὅνπερ οἰηθεῖν λέγειν ἂν τις μάλιστα ὁμολογουμένως αὐτῷ, Ἐμπεδοκλῆς. . .). In Plato, Timaeus' own worries, *Timaeus* 29c, about the limited consistency of his cosmology resonates against the precedents of Parmenides and Empedocles. Nor is it plausible to think, post-papyrus, that this appreciation was founded exclusively on his physical lore. Among ancient critics of Empedocles, the Epicureans alone target transmigration, but they do not present it as an issue that clashes with Empedocles' physics, but simply as something impossible; see Diogenes of Oenoanda Fr. 42 ed. M. F. Smith (= A 99 in Vitek). As for Empedocles' modern critics, they do not all agree in diagnosing the specific clash.

recognized in principle.<sup>6</sup> Of course that in itself does very little to settle the actual details of that unity. The goal of this study is precisely to work out a number of these details, as far as the evidence allows.

As for the first debate, that on the number of works, although the unity of Empedocles' thought does strengthen the case for the single work, it does not by itself prove that Empedocles only wrote one work. The question is more complex.<sup>7</sup> In this study I will not make a direct case for the single work, but in part three I will argue that section **d** of the papyrus contains a reference back to Empedocles' account of his exile from the divine, Diels-Kranz fragment B 115. On the single-work assumption this result is neutral, but on the two-work assumption, the papyrus puts fragment B 115 in the proem or opening sections of the *On Nature*, not the *Purifications*. If I am right, the papyrus not only shows the unity of Empedocles' thought, but it also puts an end to the viability of the standard Diels-Kranz arrangement. This is perhaps not a death blow to the two-work reconstruction, but something very close, since once we subtract B 115 from the *Purifications*, what little remains can scarcely be made sense of except in terms of the *On Nature* material.

Despite that, in this study for ease of reference I will continue to use the title *On Nature* as the name of Empedocles' major work. But as we have seen, no implications as to its contents need follow from that.

We can now turn to the literary format. To start with the obvious, the greatest challenge to our understanding of Empedocles is the fragmentary nature of our evidence. Beyond that, however, Empedocles is a challenging author whose meaning is as often implicit as explicit. As a philosopher he is striving to present a coherent "theory of everything" (see n.5), but he is also an accomplished and allusive poet who puts the traditional medium of epic to new use. Very much in the mold of Heraclitus, who patterned his own oracular exposition on Apollo, "the lord whose oracle is at Delphi neither says nor conceals, but gives signs" (Heraclitus B 93), Empedocles as well likes to "give signs." These features are well recognized by our ancient sources.<sup>8</sup> As we will see, this also explains why in antiquity Empedocles was particularly liable to appropriation by later authors.

6. *P.Strasb. gr.* Inv. 1665–1666 from Achmim (Panopolis, in Upper Roman Egypt) comes from, most likely, a single roll, in a nicely legible Greek book hand dated by its original editors to the late first century CE. That the preserved parts of section **d**, even before any textual supplements are made, can only imply the unity of Empedocles' thought, has been widely recognized since the papyrus appeared; see Martin and Primavesi 1999: 87–91. More recently see Graham 2010 vol. 1: 326–27; McKirahan 2010: 253–54 and 284–90. The only hold-out for the two-poems, two-systems view, somewhat characteristically, is Bollack 2003.

7. See n.3. Among recent editors of Empedocles, even post Strasbourg papyrus, the traditional separation remains the majority view. Bollack 2003, Vitek 2006, Gemelli-Marciano 2009, Graham 2010, and Primavesi in Mansfeld and Primavesi 2011 all reconstruct the *On Nature* and the *Purifications* as separate poems. On the location of B 115, however, see part 3.

8. On Heraclitean poetics, Kahn 1979: 87–95 and Mouraviev 2002. For Empedocles, Aristotle provides us with a number of key remarks. In his *On Poets* he praises Empedocles for his Homeric style and use of metaphor (frag. no. 1 in L. Renati ed. = Rose<sup>3</sup> 70), while he also attests to Empedocles' deliberate use of ambiguity at *Rhetoric* 1407a30–b4. In the *Nicomachean Ethics* in turn, in his discussion of *acrasia* at 1147a 17–25 (with recap at 1147b12–14), he uses people who recite

For modern interpreters, this ambiguity and allusiveness create a temptation to read into Empedocles almost anything one wishes. As a first check on this, therefore, a critical posture is required at all times. Nevertheless, because many individual passages will remain underdetermined, even after due critical scrutiny, as a more general control on my reconstruction I will have recourse to a sort of triangulation method. By this all I mean is that I will try to avoid relying on single passages, and instead take multiple readings. When enough of these signs confirm one another by pointing in the same direction, or by fitting into a coherent general scheme, this can be taken as reliable indicator of authorial intent. The effect is gradual but, once enough of these signs can be shown to converge onto a consistent doctrine or message, the result should be convincing. This is also why, in terms of my own exposition, I ask the reader to remain open-minded until she is in a position to take in enough of the evidence. Along the way I recognize that some specific choices will seem only more probable than the alternative, and, since my argument is cumulative, in the shorter term my presentation risks incurring a charge of circularity. Against this, once more I can only ask for patience until enough of the evidence has been considered.

## 1. THE LONG-LIVED DAIMONES AND THE TRANSMIGRATING SOUL

The fundamental assumption from which I begin is that Empedocles' teachings on the nature of the universe and the fate of the soul aspired to theoretical unity. That Empedocles ultimately succeeded in avoiding all contradiction is not to be expected, but we can hardly take the measure of his success or failure without first attempting a charitable reconstruction of that same unity. To examine this unity then is to consider how the different parts of that whole relate to each other, by bringing as many of them as possible into the light. In this case, in order to explore the cosmic habitats of Empedoclean soul, it will be necessary to account for Empedoclean soul not only as to its own nature but also in relation to the elements and to the body. Both of these questions I have studied elsewhere.<sup>9</sup> This first part therefore reviews the key evidence for Empedocles on soul, relying on positions argued more fully in those other works. In part two I will turn to the question at the center of this study, the cosmic habitats of soul, starting with Empedocles' location of our current life in Hades.

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Empedocles out loud as an analogy for *acrasia*, the assumption being that knowing the words of the poem was not enough to grasp their meaning. Aristotle thereby implies that Empedocles' meaning was not self-evident and required active interpretation. The fullest modern account of Empedoclean poetics is Bollack 1965. For one very good example of poetic form confirming the message, see Graham 1988. On the literary structure and use of *prolepsis* (anticipations) in Empedocles B 17 and its sequel in section **a** of the papyrus, see Trépanier 2018a.

9. Trépanier 2014 and Trépanier "Spirit" in H. Bartosh and C. Guthrie King, eds.



A) THE TRANSMIGRATING *DAIMON* AS A LONG-LIVED COMPOUND

Although didactic epic is his poetic medium, Empedocles appears to have deliberately avoided the standard epic and later philosophical term for soul, *psuche*.<sup>10</sup> In its place, according to a number of ancient sources, Empedocles identifies the continuant across different lives as certain transmigrating, long-lived *daimones*. In normal epic usage, however, the word δαίμων does not mean soul, it means “god” or “divinity,” if sometimes of a minor variety. Nevertheless, the identification seems plausible in so far as it is almost certainly based on Empedoclean usage, in particular upon the important fragment B 115, standardly assigned to the *Purifications*. Here are the first seven lines of that fragment:

There is an oracle of Necessity, an ancient *psephism* of the gods  
Eternal, sealed with broad oaths:  
Whenever one mistakenly fouls his limbs with blood  
[text uncertain] . . . or straying from his oath forswears himself,  
5     *daimones* who have obtained a life of long span,  
he wanders away from the blessed for thrice ten thousand seasons  
growing over time into all kinds of mortal forms. . . .<sup>11</sup>

The passage goes on to describe the *daimon*’s wanderings through the four elements and concludes at B 115.14 with Empedocles disclosing that he as well is “one of these, a fugitive from the divine and a vagrant.” A first question therefore is whether or not it is legitimate to follow the lead of these ancient sources by equating these long-lived *daimones* with souls. I think that it is, pending four important qualifications.

The first of these qualifications is that despite the normal meaning of the term *daimon* as “divinity,” it is unlikely that in Empedocles these beings are eternal or immortal. To be precise, in Empedocles, unlike Plato, neither transmigrating *daimones* nor even gods seem to be fully immortal. In B 115.5 the transmigrating *daimones* are described as *daimones* “who have obtained a life of long span,” δαίμονες οὔτε μακράϊωνος λελάχασι βίῳ, while elsewhere Empedocles speaks of gods, θεοί, who are repeatedly said to be (only) “long-lived,” δολιχαίωνες. This insistence on longevity but not everlastingness for both *daimones* and gods is notable precisely because it goes against, respectively, for souls, the Platonic doctrine of the immortal soul, and, for gods, the traditional Homeric notion of

10. B 138 is the only occurrence, quoted by Aristotle *Poetics* 1457b 13: χαλκῷ ἀπὸ ψυχὴν ἀρύσας, “drawing the soul/life with bronze.” Aristotle does not attribute the phrase to Empedocles and its authenticity is dubious; see Picot 2006. But even if genuine, the avoidance of *psuche* is notable. Otherwise, the entry on gods in the doxography somewhat vaguely supports the divinity of souls, A 32 (= Aëtius 1.7.27–28): “He says that elements are gods, as is the mixture of them, the cosmos, and beyond those [also the *Sphairos*, into which all of these] will be dissolved, the one in kind. He also thinks that souls are divine, and divine also are the pure who partake of them purely (καὶ θείας μὲν οἶται τὰς ψυχάς, θεῖους δὲ καὶ τοὺς μετέχοντας αὐτῶν καθαρῶς καθαρῶς).” The dactylic sequence καθαρῶς καθαρῶς may be original language. On the doxographic definition of soul, see below.

11. My translation of the DK text. The most recent edition is Rashed 2008.

“gods who are forever,” θεοὶ αἰὲν ἔόντες. Now as it happens, most of our ancient sources for *Purifications* material are much later Platonist and Neoplatonist authors. This is not an accident, since the soul and its fate beyond this life were special concerns of theirs. But while we can be grateful to these sources for suggesting the possibility of identifying these *daimones* with the transmigrating soul, in other respects we should be skeptical of importing unwarranted Platonist assumptions into the material, namely that *daimones* are essentially immortal.<sup>12</sup> On the contrary, as we have just seen, for both *daimones* and gods, Empedocles’ very words suggest that they are long-lived, which implies mortality.

My second qualification, also following from a rejection of Platonist assumptions, is that both of these *daimones* and gods must be material beings. As a general historical rule, most Presocratics are best described as default materialists.<sup>13</sup> More precisely, it is only by assuming that these beings are constrained by material conditions of some kind that we can find plausible grounds for Empedocles limiting the gods and *daimones* to long life. Here, although long-lived *daimones* remain my main quarry, we can best show this by considering the related case of long-lived gods. These are best approached from within a larger poetic formula repeated with variations a number of times in our *On Nature* fragments, where Empedocles declares these long-lived gods to be the products of the four elements and the two principles Love and Strife. Here is *On Nature* 1.269–72 (= **a (i)** 8- **a (ii)** 3) as quoted by Aristotle *Metaphysics* B 4 1000a28–32:

ἐξ ὧν πάνθ’ ὅσα τ’ ἦν ὅσα τ’ ἔσθ’ ὅσα τ’ ἔσσειτ’ ὀπίσσω  
 δένδρεά τ’ ἐβλάστησε καὶ ἀνέρες ἡδὲ γυναῖκες  
 θῆρες τ’ οἰωνοὶ τε καὶ ὕδατοθρέμμονες ἰχθῦς  
 καὶ τε θεοὶ δολιχαῖωνες τιμῇσι φέριστοι.

from which all things that ever were, are, or will be hereafter  
 have sprouted: trees and men and women  
 and beasts and birds and fish reared in water,  
 and long-lived gods, mightiest in honors.

12. Many modern commentators, e.g. Kahn 1960/1993, long the standard paper on the topic, infer full Platonic immortality for the Empedoclean soul based on the fact of reincarnation alone, but that move is doubtful. Plutarch for instance, one of our main sources for the Platonist reading of Empedocles, is aware that that is only one option. In *On the Obsolescence of Oracles* at 418e he has Heracleon directly attribute mortality to Empedoclean *daimones*: “But to impute to these demons, drawing out from the verses of Empedocles, practically by the handful, crimes and fatal mistakes, and heaven-sent exiles, and then to end up supposing even their deaths, like those of men (ἁμαρτίας καὶ ἄτας καὶ πλάνας θεηλάτους ἐπιφέρειν, τελευτῶντας δὲ καὶ θανάτους ὥσπερ ἀνθρώπων ὑποτίθεσθαι), I consider this quite rash and barbaric.” On the Platonist sources for Empedocles and the Platonist readings grafted onto him, see Van der Ben 1975, O’Brien 1981 and 2001, Osborne 1987b, Mansfeld 1992. A sampling of the Platonist texts advocating the identification of soul and *daimon* is quoted below in part three, at n.62.

13. Following standard scholarly assumptions I take it that most Presocratics, with the possible exception of Melissus, are default materialists. In the case of Love and Strife, however, their power-like features encourage some to think of them as immaterial; see Curd 2013.



If we ask why Empedocles confines these gods to merely long life, the reasons must be the combination of their being material, on the one hand, and the temporal limits of the cosmic cycle on the other. Although the chronology of the cycle remains debated, the essential point is that a cosmic cycle imposes limits to the duration of all things, provided once more we assume their material nature. Under Love, the four elements grow together into a single, blissful unity Empedocles calls the *Sphairos* (B 27–29), but then eventually Strife returns to activity (B 30) and begins to pull the elements apart, culminating in the destruction of all compounds. In between these two extremes, where both powers operate, worlds like ours arise.<sup>14</sup> This limited span, however, still leaves open the option of understanding these long-lived gods either as elements or as compounds, both of which are limited by the end-points of the cycle. Which of the two are they?

This leads to my third qualification. I submit that the class or classes of long-lived gods and long-lived *daimones* must not only consist of material beings, but that these beings must be elemental compounds of some kind.<sup>15</sup> This point is new and perhaps controversial, but it is also the most important because it is where, in my opinion, Empedocles has been the most misunderstood. The misunderstanding stems from the fact that in fragment B 6 and elsewhere Empedocles sometimes refers to the four elements by using the names of the Olympian gods. While I do not deny this aspect, to which I will return in part four, I think that it is a half-truth, one which has otherwise blinded us to much of what Empedocles has to say. Specifically, I think it is wrong to assume that the divinity of the elements means that the long-lived gods must be identified with the elements, and them alone.<sup>16</sup> For a start, the *Sphairos* shows that there is no bar to a god being a compound or that its finite life span disqualifies it from being a god (although its being a unique or “singular” entity does make it unlikely that the *Sphairos* is what Empedocles means by plural long-lived gods). To revert to the passage above, the context of the citation, in which long-lived gods are listed alongside the flora and fauna of the world, suggests rather that these long-lived gods are not the elements—though they are that as well—but simply another animal species, if of an especially honorable and long-lived kind. In other words, the more natural reading of the passage is that long-lived gods belong to the natural order of the world, somewhat along the lines of earlier

14. Thus, Love and Strife are both creative and destructive, that is, all living things are a product of the combined action of the two; see B 17.3–5. The papyrus puts this most succinctly at **a (ii)** 30/1.300: ὄψει γὰρ ξυνοδόν τε καὶ διάπτωξιν τε γενέθλη[ς,] “for you will see the coming together and the development that is birth [life].” On the chronology of the cycle, O’Brien 1969, Graham 1988, Trépanier 2003 for a symmetrical account; for the most up-to-date non-symmetrical alternative, Sedley 2007: 31–74. On the Byzantine *scholia*, see most recently Rashed 2014. The lines quoted above stood towards the end of Empedocles’ main presentation of the cycle.

15. For Empedoclean soul, the best parallel is the position taken by Cebes in the *Phaedo* 87a–88b, who believes in transmigration, but is unwilling to accept that this entails full immortality for the soul, since a long-lived soul could also be reincarnated. For earlier versions of this position, Barnes 1982: 488–500, Wright 1995: 57–76, Inwood 2001: 52–60.

16. See most recently Primavesi 2008a, who also identifies the *daimones* of B 59 as the elements. For a critique and alternative, see below and sections 1 and 2 of Trépanier 2014.

Homeric deities, as countable, individual objects and/or persons. Further, since these animals, plants and gods are described as the products of the interaction of the elements (note the phrase ἐξ ὧν “from which”) it would be absurd of Empedocles to cap this list of elemental products with elements.<sup>17</sup>

So far, I grant, it may be hard to see why this choice matters. The reason it does is that if the long-lived gods in Empedocles are stuffs or elements, and only these elements, then this reductionist move leaves no room for individual, countable gods or transmigrating *daimones*. And if so, then the best one can do with the long-lived gods and the exile of the *daimon* is to reduce it all to a myth, an allegory of the cosmic cycle.<sup>18</sup> At the broadest level, this is an unnecessary and arbitrary impoverishment of Empedocles’ world picture. Without falling back onto the old saw of the incompatibility of science and religion, why would Empedocles not have wanted to include gods and transmigrating souls as part of the world? To take two counter examples, Plato includes both lesser gods and reincarnation in the *Timaeus*, while Epicurean Atomism does not deny the reality of individual compounds, including gods of some kind, alongside the insight that everything is ultimately made of atoms and void. But not only is there “theoretical space” in Empedocles’ system for long-lived gods and transmigrating *daimones*, understood as compounds of some kind, there is in fact a lot of positive evidence that he thought of both in precisely those terms.

Before I turn to that, however, as further evidence against the identification of long-lived gods with the elements, and now to put the long-lived *daimones* back on the table, I quote another fragment, B 146, which makes it clear that certain transmigrating souls can become gods:

Clement of Alexandria *Stromateis* 4.23.150: φησὶ δὲ καὶ ὁ Ἐ. τῶν σοφῶν τὰς ψυχὰς θεοὺς γίνεσθαι ὧδέ πως γράφων· Empedocles says that the souls of the wise become gods, writing thus:

εἰς δὲ τέλος μάντεις τε καὶ ὕμνοπόλοι καὶ ἱητροί  
καὶ πρόμοι ἀνθρώποισιν ἐπιχθονίοισι πέλονται,  
ἔνθεν ἀναβλαστοῦσι θεοὶ τιμῇσι φέριστοι.

And in the end they become seers and poets and healers  
And leaders among earth-bound men  
Whence they sprout into gods, mightiest in honor.

A first observation is that although B 146 is usually assigned to the *Purifications*, the re-use by Empedocles at B 146.3 of the same poetic formula to define the gods as in the formula above from the *On Nature*, θεοὶ τιμῇσι φέριστοι, is a reliable

17. This is especially clear if we consider B 23, the simile of the painters, where Empedocles caps the simile with a version of the four-line poetic formula from above. There, two painters (the duals suggest Love and Strife) mix colors (the 4 elements) to produce (pictures of) animals, plants, and men, and long-lived gods. While pictures are at bottom just colors, Empedocles cannot have meant that the painters “make” animals, plants, . . . and long-lived gods.

18. So Primavesi 2008a.

indicator that the same gods are meant. Once more we find that Empedocles assumes no gap between physics and transmigration. Taken on its own, it is true, this picture of souls persisting through incarnations to become gods is not conclusive, since it could also be made sense of by assuming that these persisting beings are stuffs, rather than compounds. But, once more, it is more problematic for stuffs. If the continuant through reincarnation is an element or simple stuff, and nothing more, e.g. Love or air, then how would becoming a god be any different from simply dying, that is, becoming separated from its biological compound? Alternatively, as an element, how is it not already a god or, internally, how could it change to become one? I recognize that these objections may not be decisive, and that given sufficient ingenuity one could perhaps find a way round them. Nevertheless, assuming that the long-lived gods and *daimones* of long life are compounds allows us to speak more intuitively of their survival and possible death (see nn.12, 15, and 31). Death, for a compound, is to be separated into its elements; to survive is not to be so separated. To change is to remain mostly the same but undergo some variation in the relation of its components.<sup>19</sup> Overall, then, the long span of these *daimones* and/or gods is most simply explained in terms of their being especially durable but not indestructible compounds.

#### B) EMPEDOCLES' BIOLOGY: *DAIMON* AS BODY PART

I come now to my fourth qualification. It is this: the meaning of the term *daimon* in Empedocles is ultimately more biological than theological. It means a body part. To see how this can be the case requires a brief tour through Empedoclean biology.

My starting point, as we have just seen, is that if all animals and plants are compounds of elements, then they are at most temporary beings. While that much is generally recognized, it is less widely appreciated that all plants and animals are more complex than simple or uniform compounds. Importantly, both animals and plants have parts. Not only that, but as Aristotle makes clear in his critique of the *harmonia* theory of soul at *De Anima* I, 408a13–18, where Empedocles stands as the main upholder of the position, each limb or body part has its own distinct elemental ratio. For example in B 96 on bone and B 98 on flesh and blood each tissue has its specific elemental “recipe.” Accordingly, a proper description of Empedoclean plants and animals must start by recognizing them as complex assemblages of several, *different* compound-mixtures, body parts, or organs, each with its own specific elemental ratio or even nature.

Why and how do these different parts unite to form the species we know? As Aristotle complained, Empedocles did not say much about the teleological unity of

19. More subtle semantic distinctions are possible, if we posit that the death of one thing is the birth of another. But in Empedocles is the birth of a mixture always the death of its elements? There is some language to support this view, see B 8 possibly and B 17.3–5, but there is no simple correlation in Empedocles between divinity, mixture and separation. The most detailed case for some kind of elemental death-in-mixture is Palmer 2009: 289–312, based on inter-elemental change.

organisms. When Love first set out to recreate life from the elements separated by Strife (B 35), she started out by first fashioning the parts of animals in all their variety. But then, surprisingly, she did not then assemble them into organisms and left it to them to try out all possible combinations.<sup>20</sup> This period of random trial and error produced mostly non-viable monsters, as attested in fragments B 57 to B 61, but a few body parts found suitable counterparts, enabling them to survive and, eventually, to form current species. This shows that for Empedocles, the parts of organisms can be prior to the whole, at least in the zoogony of Love, and once more that it is a gross oversimplification to think of plants and animals as primarily elemental compounds, rather than more complex compounds of compounds, or assemblages of prior body parts.

Most importantly of all, it is this context that provides us with the only other attested occurrence of the word *daimon* in Empedocles, beyond fragment B 115. In fragment B 59.1, the word is used twice to describe a stage in the zoogony of Love: “when *daimon* mixes more and more with *daimon*,” αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ κατὰ μείζον ἐμίσγετο δαίμονι δαίμων. There, according to context and Simplicius’ unambiguous paraphrase, it means “limb,” and describes the second stage of the zoogony, when the primeval limbs created by Love begin to mix at random and some of them fuse together.<sup>21</sup> Not only that, but if we take B 59 to be the more fundamental Empedoclean meaning of *daimon*, as body part, then B 115.5 can acquire the meaning, perhaps only discernible in retrospect, of “those *body parts* that have received long life,” δαίμονες οἷτε μακραίωνος λελάχασι βίοιο.<sup>22</sup> And what then is the point of this contrast between long-lived body parts and other body parts, and how does it finally legitimize the Platonist identity of soul with long-lived *daimones*? In brief, the soul is a long-lived body part because it transmigrates and is “reincarnated” more or less whole, whereas the other body parts that survive through time do so, at most, by the partial replacement that is biological reproduction. In order to clarify how this is so, however, I must, by way of a final explanation, delve into Empedocles’ theory of reproduction and embryology.

As we have seen, in current sexual reproduction animals and plants are never made from elemental scratch, but are re-combinations of their parents’ body parts, transmitted through a line of descent. In that sense, current reproduction is a continuation of the primeval zoogony. It also follows from it that body parts, as enduring

20. According to Aristotle *Generation of Animals* 722b7–17, the primeval limbs were much larger than current ones, and Empedocles apparently invoked this to account for their ability to survive on their own, prior to inclusion in a body.

21. Simplicius *De Caelo* (ed. Heiberg) 587, 18–19: ἐν ταύτῃ οὖν τῇ καταστάσει μονομελῆ ἔτι τὰ γυῖα ἀπὸ τῆς τοῦ Νείκου διακρίσεως ὄντα ἐπλανᾶτο τῆς πρὸς ἄλληλα μίξεως ἐφιέμενα, “In this situation, the limbs, being still in single parts through the separation of Strife, wandered apart, still longing for intercourse with one another.” For a fuller analysis of B 59, with bibliography and review of previous suggestions, see section 1 of Trépanier 2014.

22. This yields a quasi-biological definition of the reincarnated Empedoclean soul *per genus et differentiam*. Such a redefinition of the initial term through a *prolepsis* of a more esoteric meaning is typical of Empedocles; see the modern works cited in n.8. On the location of B 115, see part three.

compound-units, have more of a claim to be the primary natural kinds of Empedocles' world than the "superorganisms" they constitute.<sup>23</sup> For, over time, the cosmic career of these primeval eyes, arms, and legs stretches far beyond the current lifespan of the animals and plants they collectively and only temporarily form. But in another important sense, this survival is not unbroken or completely continuous. According to B 63 and Aristotle's testimony, from one life to the next, the limbs undergo reproduction through sex. Not only that, but significantly, the body parts are not reproduced as individuals or relocated entire into a new body. Instead, these offspring limbs are "re-blendings" of the two respective parental parts. (This makes Empedocles a pan-geneticist in ancient terms, since the mother as well contributes genetic material to the offspring.) Accordingly, when these body parts are reproduced in offspring, we should think of these new body parts as not only replacements, but closer to blends of their parental organs. While they are perhaps the closest continuants of their parental limbs, they are not identical to them. As Aristotle notes (*De part. anim.* 722b3–28), if this did not happen and the limbs were merely shuffled about and exchanged, the normal result would be twins. But, as it is, surely on account of Strife, *two* parents are needed to make *one* child. The result is that, from one generation to the next, these body parts are not completely the same body parts.

But what then happens in the case of reincarnation or transmigration? First, if the doctrine of transmigration is to ground identity across lives, as it must have been intended to do, then it seems difficult to imagine souls as combinations or re-blendings of previous souls. Instead, they must be more or less the same individual compounds from one life to the next: they must be "long-lived." Second, and as a corollary to the first, a transmigrating soul, even though it is also a body part, must be able to survive outside a body, at least for a time, whereas a body part cannot now survive outside the body.

With respect to the first point, we can now note that fragment B 126, our main evidence for ensoulment in Empedocles, describes a female agent (Love?) "wrapping [the soul] in a tunic of foreign flesh," σαρκῶν ἀλλογνῶτι περιστέλλουσα χιτῶνι. In other words, this image of the body as the cloak of the soul suggests that in that case it is an already complete soul that is being placed within a new body. There is no indication in our sources that this soul is newly produced from elemental scratch or that it has been generated through a re-blending of its parents' souls.<sup>24</sup> If anything, this deliberate difference between one mode of survival for

23. See especially B 63 on sexual reproduction, with Aristotle's comments, also discussed below. The term "superorganism" coined by Wheeler in 1911, to describe such cooperative unions of prior autonomous animals (ant colonies are the main example), I owe to Sedley 2016, who also applies it to the *Sphairos*. More widely, since our current world is one of increasing Strife, one could speak instead of development or even descent from some higher form of integration. Again, neither perspective is more fundamental, because Empedoclean life is defined by the interplay of both powers.

24. A fragment of Porphyry, quoted from Stobaeus *Eclogae* 1.49.60, p. 446 l. 20–25 and one of our sources for B 126 (probably itself a fragment of Plutarch, no. 200 Sandbach), directly equates the *daimon* with *psyche*, using the word *psuchas* as the object which is cloaked. I thank M. Griffith for reminding me of this point.

re-blended limbs and another for the incarnation of the whole soul is somewhat awkward. It looks like an accommodation designed to preserve the very idea of reincarnation. A similar willingness to keep distinct the production (or relocation) of soul and the other body parts is not unheard of in other authors, for instance the Hippocratic *Regimen* chapters 25 and 28 and Plato's *Timaeus* 43a–44b on the immortal soul built by the demiurge.<sup>25</sup>

As for the second point, just that type of out-of-body, post-mortem survival of the soul seems attested at B 2.3–6, a fragment always attributed to the *On Nature*:

παῦρον δ' ἐν ζωῇσι βίου μέρος ἀθρήσαντες,  
ὠκύμοροι καπνοῖο δίκην ἀρθέντες ἀπέπταν  
αὐτὸ μόνον πεισθέντες, ὅτῳ προσέκυρσεν ἕκαστος  
πάντος' ἐλαννόμενοι, τὸ δὲ οὖλον εὔχεται εὐρεῖν·

fixing their sights on the small part of life in plants and animals,  
swift-fated, rising like smoke, they fly off,  
convinced of only one thing, whatever each has bumped into,  
as they are driven in all directions, boasting that he has found the  
whole.<sup>26</sup>

Ignoring much else worthy of comment here, we can note that these souls, which seem pretty undistinguished, quit the body like Homeric souls, by taking flight, ἀπέπταν. For reasons that will become clearer below, I also note that they are here depicted as rising, ἀρθέντες, if somewhat lazily, while remaining thinking agents of some kind, since Empedocles insists that they carry their narrow empirical prejudices with them to the beyond.

If we seek to determine which body part it is that survives from one life to the next, one passage that does suggest such a named organ is fragment B 134. This fragment, however, is not usually cited in accounts of the transmigrating soul, but, according to its main source, it is our best positive description of an Empedoclean god. Over lines 1–3 Empedocles first insists that the subject has no head, nor arms, no feet or swift knees or genitals, but then at lines 4–5 he tells us:

ἀλλὰ φρήν ἱερὴ καὶ ἀθέσφατος ἔπλετο μόνον  
φροντίσι κόσμον ἅπαντα καταῖσσοῦσα θοῇσιν

It is nothing but a holy and ineffable *phren*,  
soaring through the whole cosmos on swift thoughts.

By calling it “a holy *phren*,” again instead of *psuche*, Empedocles’ intent was surely to connote its former connection to embodied life. The word, as found in early epic and tragedy, sometimes in the plural *phrenes*, normally designates the

25. For discussion, see Jouanna 2012. For immortality by replacement compared with other or higher types of salvation, compare also Diotima in Plato *Symposium* 207c–208b.

26. Greek text after Viték 2006.



organ(s) of thought among the living (Inwood 2001 translates B 134.4 “a sacred and ineffable thought organ”). In B 134, moreover, Empedocles pointedly contrasts the soaring *phren* with other body parts, while in other fragments he refers to the *phren* occupying its more conventional position, as the organ of thought within the body. So for example in fragment B 133.2–3 Empedocles describes the *phren* as the destination of the input from the senses: ἡπὲρ τε μεγίστη / πειθοῦς ἀνθρώποισιν ἀμαξίτῳ εἰς φρένα πίπτει, “. . . in the usual way by which / the greatest road of persuasion for men falls into the *phren*.”<sup>27</sup> In short, B 134 seems to depict what happens when a *phren* not only leaves the body, but eventually breaks free from the cycle of incarnations to become a god as in B 146 above. Surely not by accident, the passive, smoke-like floating of the souls of B 2 compares unfavorably with the active soaring of the holy *phren*.

To conclude this subsection, we have abundant grounds to think that the transmigrating, long-lived *daimones* of B 115, which our Platonist sources identify with the reincarnated Platonic soul, are no myth, but have a firm foothold not only within Empedocles’ physics but also in his biology. A *daimon* is a body part, an elemental compound with its specific elemental recipe, and as such a natural kind and an early form of (Aristotelian) substance. Its long-lived variety, identified by Empedocles with the organ of thought, offers a suitable physical continuant to ground continuity from one life to the next, but not to secure immortality, since it remains a compound and is thus destructible.

### C) SOUL AS A MIXTURE OF FIRE AND AIR

Although this tells us what type of thing the Empedoclean soul must be, it does not yet tell us what elements it is made of, or how exactly it relates to the body during life. Exploration of these further details, to which we now turn, confirms the account given so far, and leads directly to the eschatological side of the study, the cosmic habitats of soul. Here, to keep this next part of the story as short as possible, the intersection of some old and new evidence now provides us with a new and—I think—viable candidate for the transmigrating soul.

First, the old evidence. Although an ancient definition of Empedoclean soul has been transmitted to us by our doxographic sources, the testimony was rejected by Diels in the nineteenth century and it does not figure in most recent editions. This is all the more surprising because the pedigree of this testimony, according to the very standards Diels helped to establish, is excellent. Theodoret (393–458/

27. For further examples see B 5, B 15 and, from the papyrus, a (ii) 29/ I. 299: ἐκ τῶν ἀψευδῆ κομισαὶ φρενὶ δέγματα μύθων, “from which convey true proofs of my words to your *phren*.” Empedocles’ terminology is not rigid, however, and he also uses other standard literary terms for the organs of thought such as *prapides* and *thumos*. On that background, see Onians 1951, Clarke 1999, Cairns 2003. A notable parallel is Pindar *Olympian* 2.57: ἀπάλαμνοι φρένες, “hapless *phrenes*” noted below. Lastly, in Lucretius, the reference to Empedocles at 1.731–32 and the “songs from his divine chest,” *carmina* . . . *divini pectoris eius*, whose discoveries show him “to have been scarcely born from human stock” seem to play off this notion of a “divine” thought organ.

66 CE), our source for a paragraph-long list of soul-definitions according to various schools or thinkers, refers by name to Plutarch, Porphyry, and Aëtius as his sources in enumerating these definitions, while, so far as we can tell, all the other definitions on the list are technically correct. Given such a context, it is hard to justify singling this one testimony out for rejection. Here it is: “Empedocles [says that soul] is a mixture of a certain *aither*-like and air-like nature,” ὁ δὲ Ἐμπεδοκλῆς μῆγμα ἐξ αἰθερώδους καὶ ἀερώδους οὐσίας.<sup>28</sup>

The only serious rival to this definition in our sources is blood, which is often related to thought or the organ of thought in Empedocles, as in B 105. This is plausible so long as we confine ourselves to embodied life. But otherwise it is hard to imagine how blood could be reincarnated or “float” away from the body at death, as described in B 2 above. In fact, this is only an apparent clash, for the doxography is consistent in claiming that blood for Empedocles is not so much the soul as the seat of the soul.<sup>29</sup> I return to blood below, but for now this doxographic testimony finds new textual support in Primavesi’s recent edition of fragment B 9 (ed. 2011 = his 54b):

οἱ δ’ ὅτε μὲν κατὰ φῶτα μιγὲν φῶς αἰθέρι<ον βῆι>  
ἢ κατὰ θηρῶν ἀγροτέρων γένος ἢ κατὰ θάμνων  
ἢ κατ’ οἰωνῶν, τό γε μὲν <καλέουσι> γενέσθαι,  
εἴτε δ’ ἀποκρινθῶσι, τὸ δ’ αὖ δυσδαίμονα πότμον·  
ἢι θέμις <οὐ> καλέουσι, νόμῳ δ’ ἐπίρημι καὶ αὐτός.

But they, whenever fire mixed with air descends into a man,  
or into the race of wild beasts or of bushes  
or into that of birds, that they call “coming into being”;  
and when it is separated out, they say it is “an accursed fate”;  
which it is not right for them to say, but I too will assent to the  
custom.

The fragment is quoted by Plutarch in his pamphlet against the Epicurean Colotes at 1113b. It occurs in a section where Plutarch is building up to the point that Empedocles does not “do away with life,” as Colotes alleges, but that his concept of life is in fact more generous than that of the Epicureans, since he posits continued existence before and after this life. The fragment describes the language and outlook of unnamed others at the phenomena of birth and death. Unfortunately,

28. Theodoret *Graecorum affectionum curatio* 5.16.10–19.1 not retained in *Doxographi graeci* (= Aëtius 4.3 p. 389) nor in *Poetarum philosophorum* (1901) under testimony A 85 and hence not in Diels-Kranz. It is not entirely clear why Diels rejected this testimony but its rejection is probably meant to favor blood. It is printed by Viték 2006 as A 85<sup>4</sup> and Mansfeld and Runia will print it in their forthcoming edition of the doxography.

29. See A 85 and the end of A 30, a one-paragraph summary of Empedoclean doctrine excerpted by Eusebius from Pseudo-Plutarch: “The mind [τὸ δὲ ἡγεμονικόν, lit. governing part] is neither in the head nor in the chest, but in the blood. From which, whatever part of the body is more infused with it (he calls it the governing part), in that part people excel.”

the transmitted text leaves a gap at the end of line 1 which has been the object of much conjecture. Primavesi's elegant solution, which is independent of the doxographic testimony above, seems inspired from the text of the papyrus at section **d** line 15, where the extant last half of the line reads: ] εἰς τόπον ἔσχατι[ον β]ῆι. In section **d**, as we can tell from the previous lines, the subject that “goes to the furthest place” is fire rising out of the earth, and the result is the creation of living things.<sup>30</sup> Here, by contrast, the passage does not describe fire, but “fire mixed with aither,” *μυγὲν φῶς αἰθέριον*, descending into or being separated out from living creatures.

While Primavesi's textual solution seems to me obviously correct, the closeness of B 9.1 to the doxographic account of soul offers us a good reason to think that Empedocles did in fact identify the transmigrating soul as mixture of fire and air. For despite some changes in terminology, the language of the later text maps well onto *μυγὲν φῶς αἰθέριον*. The mixture component *μῖγμα/μυγὲν* is unproblematic, as is glossing Empedoclean light/fire, *φῶς*, as an *aether-like* substance, *αἰθερώδης οὐσία*, following the later change in the meaning of the word *aither*, while taking the Empedoclean *αἰθέριον* as air is also possible. But other factors also support the identity. First is the resulting status of the soul as a destructible if long-lived compound, which aligns with the metaphysical properties of soul outlined above.<sup>31</sup>

Reinforcing this general line, and despite the long-term mortality of the soul, we can note that here and elsewhere Empedocles appears to share with Plato a “Pythagorean” definition of death as the separation of the soul from the body, not the view that death is the simultaneous destruction of both (for example, *Gorgias* 524b, *Phaedo* 64c and 70a). Empedocles describes death as a “release” at B 15.4 <ἐπεὶ> λύθεν, and at B 15.1 claims that “a man wise in his *phrenes*” would “divine” that the capacity to suffer good and evil extends beyond this life. More directly relevant is a factor that will come to the fore in the next sections, the connection made in our sources between the Empedoclean soul and its natural location in the heavens. To take but one example, Plutarch at *De Iside et Osiride* 361c relates that: “Empedocles says that the *daimones* pay the penalty for their sins

30. Note that *κατὰ φῶτα μυγὲν φῶς αἰθέριον βῆι* is ambiguous between a construal of *κατὰ* with *μυγὲν* or with *βῆι*. If *κατὰ* goes with *μυγὲν*, then in *φῶς αἰθέριον* we have an element as subject, *φῶς*, with an epithet, *αἰθέριον*, as in Parmenides B 8.56, *φλογὸς αἰθέριον πῦρ*. If we construe *κατὰ* with *βῆι*, the phrase *μυγὲν φῶς αἰθέριον* is the subject, a grammatically single compound of fire and air. In favor of the first is the verb *ἀποκρινθῶσι* in line B 9.4 appropriate for separation from mixture. In favor of the second is the reprise of *ἡ κατὰ* followed by an accusative in the next lines. But a fatal objection to construing *κατὰ* with *μυγὲν* is that the normal syntax of the verb requires a dative for the other element in a mixture; see B 59.1. The verb *καταβαίνω*, however, can take an accusative of place; see *LSJ* and compare Sophocles *Antigone* 821–22, *ζῶσα μόνη δὴ / θνητῶν Αἰδὸν καταβήσῃ*. For a strong semantic reason for taking it as a compound with *κατὰ*, see below.

31. This is supported elsewhere in the doxography, where the mortality of the soul is recognized; see Aëtius 5.25, 4 (Diels p. 437): “Empedocles says that death occurs by the separation of the fiery [Diels conjectures: and the airy and the earthy and the watery] out of which the blend of man is constituted. So that, according to this, death is common to body and soul,” (Ε. τὸν θάνατον γίνεσθαι διαχωρισμῶι τοῦ πυρὸς . . . ὥστε κατὰ τοῦτο κοινὸν εἶναι τὸν θάνατον σώματος καὶ ψυχῆς).

and their faults . . . until, thus chastened and purified, they regain their natural place and station,” κολασθέντες οὕτω καὶ καθαρθέντες αἴθις τὴν κατὰ φύσιν χώραν καὶ τάξιν ἀπολάβωσι. As we will see in part four, the meaning of a “natural station” for purified Empedoclean souls can best be unpacked by relating the soul, as a mixture of air and fire, to the atmosphere, where those two elements predominate.

Before that, however, we can end this section by considering the soul’s relation to the body in this life. Here, as briefly as possible, I have already noted that the doxography is consistent in claiming that blood for him is not the soul but the seat of soul. Next we can note that the “mixture of fire and air” described above is functionally very close to *pneuma* in later ancient thought, best known from Aristotle to the Stoics and various medical theorists. A key aspect of this similarity with later *pneuma* theories is that for all of these later thinkers, despite their differences, during life the *pneuma* is located in the blood. As far as Empedocles is concerned, this arrangement provides us with a neat solution to the problem of the relation between body and soul: in life, the transmigrating soul must be located in the blood.<sup>32</sup> The main worry with such a solution is that it may be an anachronism imposed on the material from later sources. But a secure Presocratic parallel for this type of *pneuma* theory *avant la lettre* occurs in Diogenes of Apollonia, who is only a few years later than Empedocles and who places his divine, warm air within the blood.<sup>33</sup> For soul itself, we have seen that the phrase μυγὲν φῶς αἰθέριον of B 9.1 plausibly anchors the doxographic testimony in the original text, against the possibility of invention by later sources.

The clearest positive testimony for this exact place of Empedoclean soul within the body occurs at Cicero *Tusculan Disputations* 1.41–42. In Cicero, it is also worth noting, the passage is the lead-in to a more extended account of the disembodied life to be led by the soul in the heavens:

And since these facts are established it ought to be clear that souls, on quitting the body, whether they are airy, that is to say, of the nature of breath, or fiery, are carried aloft. . . . The soul then is some one or other of these things, so that the mind, with all its activity, has not to lie buried in the heart or brain, or in the blood of Empedocles’ theory (*Horum igitur aliquid est animus ne tam vegeta mens aut in corde cerebrove aut in Empedocleo sanguine demersa iaceat*).

Loeb text and trans. by J. E. King 1927

32. Except of course for plants. For the Empedoclean evidence, including Aristotle’s testimony and use of B 109, see Trépanier “Spirit” and n.72.

33. Simplicius (*in Phys.* 153, 13), in introducing the long quotation on the blood vessels, writes: “And next (after B 5) he shows that the seed of animals is airy and that thoughts occur when the air along with the blood lays hold of the whole body through the veins, in which account he also gives a precise anatomy of the blood vessels,” πνευματώδές ἐστι καὶ νοήσεις γίνονται τοῦ ἀέρος σὺν τῷ αἵματι τὸ ὅλον σῶμα καταλαμβάνοντος διὰ τῶν φλεβῶν, ἐν οἷς καὶ ἀνατομὴν ἀκριβῆ τῶν φλεβῶν παραδίδωσιν. Fuller discussion in Trépanier “Spirit.”

Cicero here is very likely working from earlier Hellenistic surveys and there is little doubt that the outline account of soul he gives in this section, including its celestial afterlife, is ultimately derived from Stoic sources.<sup>34</sup> Once more this may mean that this material is distorted by hindsight. But in view of the other evidence advanced above, and more to be considered later, it seems more plausible to posit a case of Stoic appropriation rather than wholesale invention.

Indeed, in this area Stoic appropriation does not appear to stop at physiology. Cicero's comment implies not only that the Empedoclean soul is "plunged" in blood during life, but his language also suggests that when it is in the body, the soul lies "buried" as if it were dead (*aut in Empedocleo sanguine demersa iaceat*). Is this a Stoic notion in Cicero or does it reflect the original? Most likely both. To be sure the notion has excellent Stoic credentials. We know that Chrysippus, and most likely Zeno, sought to recover traditional beliefs about the afterlife by allegorizing Hades as the element air and combined that with a commitment to the celestial afterlife for the soul, so as to reinterpret our current life as Hades.<sup>35</sup> Yet the sentiment is also perfectly at home in Empedocles, for as we will now see, many other passages suggest that Empedocles situated our life in Hades. It is just as likely, therefore, that both of these related aspects were part of a wider Stoic appropriation of Empedocles.

## 2. LIFE IN HADES AND LEVELS OF LIFE

Following this account of Empedoclean soul, we are now in a position to begin our investigation of the relation between the transmigrating soul and its cosmic habitats. The first point to make is that attributing the life in Hades doctrine to Empedocles is not novel, but has long been a recognized feature of the *Purifications* material. Already in 1901 Diels can comment on B 121 that *orcus Empedocli est terra*. The only difference is that the division of Empedocles' thought at the time meant that no need was felt to take the claim seriously as describing an actual cosmic location.<sup>36</sup>

What then does it mean to say we live in Hades? The idea, as I understand it, is not so much an attempt to redraw the map of the cosmos as to recharacterize the

34. On that background, Hoven 1971.

35. *SVF* I 147; II 430. Zeno only speaks of different outcomes, but Chrysippus is more explicit. The sources are reviewed in Hoven 1971: 68–78.

36. Quoted from Diels 1901, the basis for the Empedocles sections in D-K. Diels follows the Neoplatonist Hierocles, the author of the citation, who identifies earth as Hades, albeit in standard Neoplatonic fashion, via a conflation with the *Phaedrus* myth. Later editions of DK contradict this at the note on B 121. Based on the term *skotos*, darkness, in B 132.2 where it describes mind of the man who has "obscure" opinions about the gods, DK infers a response with B 135, on the law against slaughter which extends through the *aither* and bright fire, to conclude that B 121 does not in fact identify the earth as Hades ("also wird doch die Erde, nicht der Hades gemeint sein"). I cannot honestly say that I follow the reasoning. At most I think DK wants to retain a traditional Hades beneath the earth. See rather Wright 1995: 75n.73 and 1995: 278–79.

nature of our current life on the surface of the earth. The doctrine does this in two main respects: by depicting life on earth as wretched and sorrowful, and by claiming that our current life is itself but an imperfect shadow of another happier and higher existence, thus exactly inverting the traditional relation of Hades and life.<sup>37</sup> At an interpretative level, moreover, it is by far the most economical way of drawing together the various pessimistic deprecations of human life found in Empedocles. Thus in B 15.2 he scoffs at “what men call life” while in B 2.3, quoted above, he tells us that “the life in plants and animals” is only a “small part of life”; elsewhere he derides life on earth as an aimless “wandering on the shore of life” (B 20.5/*On Nature* 1.306). Almost certainly, the life in Hades doctrine is older than Empedocles, since it appears already strongly implied in Heraclitus, and it is hard to imagine that it did not already figure in early Pythagoreanism.<sup>38</sup> Around a century later, Plato expresses the idea most succinctly at *Gorgias* 493a1–3, where he presents it as something already current: “. . .and perhaps in fact we have died. For before now I have heard from one of the wise men that we are now dead and our bodies are our graves.”

#### A) THE FRAGMENTS

We can start with a selection of the most relevant fragments. There we find the two most consistent claims are that the previous place was happier and that we now find ourselves in a lower realm. In B 118 Empedocles tells us, “I wept and I wailed when I saw the unfamiliar place,” κλαῦσά τε καὶ κόκυσα ἰδὼν ἀσυνήθεα χῶρον, while in B 120 certain “psychopompic” powers state that “we have come to this roofed cavern,” ἡλύθομεν τόδ’ ὑπ’ ἄντρον ὑπόστεγον. Grimmiest of all, in B 121 Empedocles describes “a joyless place” (ἀτερπέα χῶρον) where disease and death run rampant on the “plain of *Atē*” (Ἀτης ἀν λειμῶνα). Once more this pessimism and sadness are best made sense of as so many hints at our life in Hades.

As pointed out in the introduction, this general picture is now strongly confirmed by lines 5 to 10 of section **d** of the papyrus. Nevertheless, in order to do full justice to that material, I reserve it for separate discussion in part three. For now, one of the clearest allusions to the doctrine comes from the new edition of B 9 considered above. For as we can now notice, in that fragment the phrase κατὰ . . . βῆι, used to describe the “fire mixed with air” that enters men, but also wild beasts, birds, and bushes, frames every one of these births as a *katabasis*, that

37. A nice discussion of this in Sourvinou-Inwood 1995: 80 arguing against any change of mind by Achilles in his underworld encounter with Odysseus: “What is expressed through this image is . . . the early Greek love of life: any life is preferable to death, a wretched servant alive is better off than the king of the dead.”

38. For the life in Hades theme in Heraclitus, see Granger 2000. On the rivalry between Heraclitus and Pythagoras, see Huffman 2008 and Finkelberg 2013. On Pythagoreanism in general, see now Huffman 2014 with full bibliography; on Pythagorean soul, Huffman 2009. On life in Hades compare also B 126 above, and especially ἀλλογνῶτι, “foreign.” The verb περιστέλλουσα is an appropriate term for wrapping a corpse in a shroud (*LSJ* s.v. I.2).



is, a descent to Hades. This turn of phrase can hardly be accidental, down to the detail of including plants in the round of incarnations, which Aristotle and later sources confirm Empedocles to have maintained were ensouled (in B 117.2 he tells us he has been a bush; see also [Aristotle] *On Plants* 816b40–817a3). Until now, B 9 has usually been taken as Empedocles' attempt to fault ordinary people's mistaken belief in generation into and destruction out of nothing. This is part of its meaning, but the last line's ἦι θέμις <οὐ> καλέουσι also points out a mistaken inversion of the happiness and sorrow associated with birth and death. Here, the unnamed "they" of line 1 declare separation from the body "a wretched fate," δυσδαίμονα πότμον, which contains an untranslatable allusion to *daimones*. But as the last line insists, this picture is not right. Just such an inversion of the normal valuation of life and death is very similar to what Plato has Socrates argue in the opening sections of the *Phaedo* 66b–68b, that death is in fact a liberation and purification from the curse of the body (also at 114c). Thus the likely reference to life as a *katabasis* in B 9 not only supports taking the transmigrating soul as a compound of fire and air but it also endorses the life in Hades doctrine.<sup>39</sup>

More passages can be added to this dossier in part four, once we have explored Empedocles' cosmology, but we have seen enough to confirm the setting of our current life. It would be wrong, however, to overlook one last especially strong hint in fragment B 111. In this fragment, one of the most puzzling in all of Presocratic philosophy, Empedocles promises—or appears to promise—to teach the disciple a list of magical powers that include cures for all ills, protection from aging, weather control, and, in the final line, how to raise the dead, B 111.9: ἄξεις δ' ἐξ Αἵδαο καταφθιμένου μένος ἀνδρός, "you will lead out from Hades the might of a dead man." If the life in Hades doctrine can be attributed to Empedocles, then we need no longer choose between taking this claim as directly magical or deflating it as a rational reference to natural but secret powers of nature.<sup>40</sup> Rather, we can appreciate it as one more hint, perhaps the most explicit available, of our lowly station in the wider cosmos. Through it, we can even glimpse Empedocles' wider purpose, which is to teach the hearer to rise above it.<sup>41</sup>

39. This then is my final reason for construing *μυγὲν φῶς αἰθέριον* as a compound, not as the element fire alone; see n. 30. In B 9 note also the play on "light," *φάος/φῶς*, and "man," *φῶς*, in line 1, *κατὰ φῶτα μυγὲν φῶς*, and a reference to *daimon* in line 4's *δυσδαίμονα πότμον*. On light and man, see Cosgrove 2011.

40. Kingsley 1995 advances a magical reading of Empedocles, with this passage at its heart. More recently, the passage has been identified in a partial quotation from Herculaneum; see Armstrong and Ponczoch 2011 and Armstrong 2013. For a review of recent interpretations of B 111, Gregory 2014: 181–83.

41. As such, I would venture that the "dead man" could refer to the disciple himself, and through him, the reader. Compare the flight of the mind in B 134 or B 2.8–9, *σὺ δ' οὖν, ἐπεὶ ᾧδ' ἐλίσσῃς, / πεύσσαι· οὐ πλεῖον γε βροτεῖν μῆτις ὄρωρεν*, "But you then, since you have turned away thus / you will learn. Mortal thought certainly rises no further."

## B) SOME TESTIMONIES

Ancient testimonies for different cosmic levels in Empedocles have never been lacking but they have largely been ignored because, until the Strasbourg papyrus, it was easier to see the difficulties they presented than to take their content at face value. The following four passages, three of them from Hippolytus, are representative and comparatively clear:

Plutarch *De exilio* 607cd: [after quoting and paraphrasing B 115] because [the soul] does not recall or remember “from what honor and magnitude of blessedness” (Empedocles B 119, 1) it has departed, not exchanging Athens for Sardis, nor Lemnos for Corinth, but life on earth for heaven and the moon. . . .

Hippolytus *Refutatio omnium haeresium* 1.3: Then Empedocles, coming after these people [the Pythagoreans], he as well said many things concerning the nature of *daimones*, how they go around and administer matters around the earth, being most numerous. He said the first principles of the universe were Love and Strife, and that God was the intelligible fire of the monad, and that everything consists of fire and everything will be dissolved into fire, with which doctrine the Stoics also agree, awaiting the *ekpyrosis*.

*Refutatio omnium haeresium* 1.4.3 (= DK A62): Similarly Empedocles says that our whole level is full of evils, and that the evils reach up to the moon from the space around the earth, but go no further, in that the whole place above the moon is more pure.

*Refutatio omnium haeresium* 7.29.22: for he says that the bodies of living creatures that are eaten are the dwelling places of punished souls.<sup>42</sup>

In the first testimony, which is not strictly doxographic, Plutarch links the earth with the moon and heaven within a two- or three-level scheme: earth (as Hades?) up to the moon, then a heavenly region above the moon, then the sky or the vault of heaven as a third level or perhaps only the upper limit of the second—it remains unclear. Plutarch implies, as the other testimonies do not, that these are also different habitats for souls, as he also does in *De Iside et Osiride* 361c quoted above, which

42. Plutarch *De exilio* 607cd: “ἐξ οἷς τιμῆς τε καὶ ὅσσου μήκεος ὄλβου” μεθέστηκεν, οὐ Σάρδεων Αθήνας οὐδὲ Κορίνθου Λήμνον ἢ Σκύρον ἀλλ’ οὐρανοῦ καὶ σελήνης γῆν ἀμειψαμένη καὶ τὸν ἐπὶ γῆς βίον. . . . Hippolytus *Refutatio* 1.3: Ἐμπεδοκλῆς δὲ μετὰ τούτους γενόμενος καὶ <αὐτὸς> περὶ δαϊμόνων φύσεως εἶπε πολλά, <καὶ> ὡς ἀναστρέφονται διοικοῦντες τὰ κατὰ τὴν γῆν, ὄντες πλείστοι. οὗτος τὴν τοῦ παντὸς ἀρχὴν νεῖκος καὶ φιλίαν ἔφη, καὶ τὸ τῆς μονάδος νοερὸν πῦρ τὸν θεόν, καὶ συνεστάναι ἐκ πυρὸς τὰ πάντα καὶ εἰς πῦρ ἀναλυθήσεσθαι· ὃ σχεδὸν καὶ οἱ Στωϊκοὶ συντίθενται δόγματι, ἐκπύρωσιν προσδοκῶντες. *Refutatio* 1.4.3 (= DK A62): καὶ ὥσπερ ὁ Ἐμπεδοκλῆς πάντα τὸν καθ’ ἡμᾶς τόπον ἔφη κακῶν μεστὸν εἶναι καὶ μέχρι μὲν σελήνης τὰ κακὰ φθάνειν ἐκ τοῦ περὶ γῆν τόπου ταθέντα, περαιτέρω δὲ μὴ χωρεῖν, ἅτε καθαρωτέρου τοῦ ὑπὲρ τὴν σελήνην παντὸς ὄντος τόπου. . . . *Refutatio* 7.29.22 : εἶναι γάρ φησι τὰ σώματα τῶν ζώων τὰ ἐσθιόμενα ψυχῶν κεκολασμένων οἰκητήρια. For a complete set of testimonies on the moon see Picot 2008.

links souls with a purer natural location. The second testimony adds *daimones* into the mix, connecting them to the earthly level. Whether these are discarnate souls is hard to tell, but they are said to administer things down here. The third passage, the second from Hippolytus, stresses only two levels, a purer heavenly level and an impure sublunar one, “full of evils,” as he puts it. The fourth passage does not explicitly discuss levels, but adds the point that our level or location, as implied by reference to living creatures, is a place of punishment for souls. This is not the same as the description of the body as a grave, as in Plato’s *Gorgias* passage above, but there is some overlap in so far as the body in both cases is the container of the punished soul. The idea that bodies are the location of punishment for souls does occur in the *Phaedo*, however, and not only in the myth.

Since these testimonies have been completely ignored, we can first ask if this neglect is justified. The sources themselves are relatively late (late first to third century CE) and as the first Hippolytan testimony shows, with its conflation of Stoic and Platonist doctrines, replete with difficulties. Since these cosmic boundaries are standard in post-Aristotelian thought, we can once again worry that they are being projected back onto Empedocles. But if some distortion is likely, the notion that they proceed from nothing at all is much harder to accept, especially now, against the background of the papyrus. Indeed, that stronger position, once stated, seems ultimately self-defeating. For as was the case for soul above, even if we grant that the Stoics, followed by various Platonists and Neoplatonists, all assimilate Empedocles to their own thought, unless we also assume some original similarity of views between each pair, that leaves these later appropriations of Empedocles groundless in the first instance.<sup>43</sup> Thus, while allowing for some doubts, the clustering of attributes divided between upper/purer/happier and lower/impure/evil must nevertheless reflect the idea of at least two cosmic levels of life. And if so, it is a simple move from that to equate the lower “level of evils” with our life in Hades, contrasting with a higher and happier celestial life. A more difficult issue, to which I will return, is whether those two levels are all there is.

#### C) HISTORICAL PARALLELS: THE CELESTIAL AFTERLIFE IN PINDAR AND PLATO

From testimonies we can turn next to historical parallels. I start with some more general historical observations before focusing on our two closest, Plato’s *Phaedo* myth and Pindar’s Second *Olympian Ode*.

43. On the Stoics, see above and esp. Hoven 1971. On the Stoic-Platonist mix see Mansfeld 1992; for the Platonists, see the modern references in n.12; on the history of the term *kosmos noetos*, Runia 1999. For a good sampling of the later reception of Empedocles on soul, one can start by reading the quotation contexts of fragments B 120 to B 124. Very roughly, the Platonists, Plutarch especially, identify the transmigrating δαίμων with the immortal Platonic soul, while the Neoplatonists go one step further by building an allegory upon the cosmic cycle, in which the breakup of the *Sphairos* by Strife corresponds to the soul’s descent from the unity of the intelligible world into the material realm.

The downgrading of current life to Hades and the resulting redefinition of the celestial life as our spiritual home belongs to the wider historical rise of the celestial afterlife. This shift away from the Homeric conception of the subterranean afterlife leading to the later notion of heaven is usually correlated with the rise of astrology in the fourth century and Hellenistic period, with Plato's *Phaedrus* myth often cited as the first attested case of astrological motifs in Greek philosophy.<sup>44</sup> Yet there is evidence to show that the celestial afterlife, including astral immortality, was already well established by the second half of the fifth century. In other words, the celestial afterlife did not have to wait for astrology to get going. If we concentrate on the simpler question of whether souls go up or down when we die, we can see that the "up" option is already well attested by the second half of the fifth century. Among many possible examples, let me cite two public statements, the epigram for the Athenians killed in action at Potidea of 432 BC (*IG* I<sup>3</sup>.1179) and a passage from Aristophanes' *Peace* in 421 BC. In the inscription, the souls of the deceased go to (rejoin?) the *aither* 2.6–7: αἰθέρ μὲμ φσυχὰς ὑπεδέχσατο, σόμ[ατα δὲ χθόν] / τῶνδε: "The *aither* received the souls, the earth the bodies/ of these men." In Aristophanes' *Peace*, at lines 833–35 a slave, speaking to Trygaeus who has visited heaven on the back of a monstrous dung-beetle, asks: "Is it then true what they say, that in the *aither* we become stars, when someone dies?" κατὰ τὸν αἰθέρα / ὥς ἀστέρες γιγνόμεθ', ὅταν τις ἀποθάνῃ; To which Trygaeus replies: "Yes indeed!" The public nature of both texts shows that by the later fifth century, the notion of a celestial afterlife, including astral immortality, was widely shared, if not necessarily a conventional belief. More precisely the notion is often related to philosophers and intellectuals. In the *Clouds* of 423 BC, when Socrates is first introduced, suspended from a basket above stage, he is asked what he doing there, to which he replies: "I am air-walking" ἀεροβατῶ.<sup>45</sup> Given the wide dissemination of these ideas by the later fifth century, it is no strain to posit that they were already on the scene a few decades earlier.

If we seek closer parallels for Empedocles' life scheme, then the two closest by far are Plato's *Phaedo* myth and Pindar's Second *Olympian Ode*. The minimal inference to be drawn from both is that the multi-level schemes we find in Plato and Pindar open up the possibility that the two levels we have discerned so far in Empedocles need not be all there is. At the same time, the three texts are very close in content, which raises the question of their historical relation to one another. Based on those similarities I will argue that we should go beyond the

44. Knowledge of some constellations is as old as Homer, but the earliest Greek representation of something approaching a zodiac is the Halai skyphos of 625 BC, see Barnes 2014; for Early Greek astronomy, Graham 2013. For the rise of astrology see the article "Hellenistic Astronomy" by M. Lawrence in the *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy* <http://www.iep.utm.edu/astr-hel/>. Earlier notable studies include Cumont 1912, Boyancé 1952, Burkert 1972 (on which see below). On the afterlife in general, Bremmer 2002 chapters 2 and 3.

45. For the Pythagorean Socrates of the *Phaedo* in relation to Aristophanes' portrait, see Rashed 2009.

minimal conclusion and assume that the three are probably related to a common, Pythagorean background. Nevertheless, my argument does not depend directly on that stronger claim, since there is other evidence to suggest that there are more than two cosmic levels of life in Empedocles, as we will see in part four.

Plato's cosmological myth, to start with the more detailed of the two, shows that there is no reason to think that life on two or more levels was inconceivable for him, at least in a myth. At 109c Socrates describes our own mistaken belief that we live upon the surface, compared to our actual low or middle-to-low cosmic position:

Now we ourselves do not realize that we live in these hollows: we imagine we live up on the earth's surface; it is as if someone living half-way down towards the bottom of the ocean were to suppose himself to live on the surface of the sea; he would see the sun and the stars through the water, and believe the sea to be the sky. . . .

trans. Hackforth 1952

There follows an extended description of the wondrous life of the *aither*-dwellers above us, with a wink at the Isles of the Blessed at 111a, before Plato turns back downwards to relate the varied fates of souls in the system of underground rivers. After that, Plato returns to the top class:

But lastly there are those that are deemed to have made notable progress on the road to righteous living; and these are they that are freed and delivered from the prison-houses of this interior of the earth, and come to make their habitation in the pure region above ground. And those of their number who have attained full purity through philosophy live for evermore without any bodies at all, and attain to habitations even fairer than those others; but the nature of these it would not be easy to reveal, even were time enough left me.

114 bc; trans. after Hackforth 1952

The last sentence is deliberately enigmatic, but shows that Plato posits at least three levels: earth, *aither*-level, and topmost level. For earth, "prison-houses" surely denotes life in Hades, comparable to the earlier remarks on our being in a ward or prison house (*phroua*, 62b3). As for the topmost level, a good guess as to this highest type of life can be had by reading back into it comparable passages from the *Phaedrus* (246a-252c) and the *Timaeus* (41d and 42b). In the *Timaeus* astral life offers the best "vehicle" for individual souls, while in the *Phaedrus* the soul itself is perfectible up to the point when it can easily reach its home among the stars. In fact, three levels may not be enough, since the *Phaedo* myth's underground rivers could count as a separate fourth level, unless they belong to earth as Hades. On balance, I prefer three levels, with the rivers being part of earth, since Plato locates us at the top of the bottom ("half-way down towards the bottom of the ocean. . ."), but I do not press the point.

Next let us briefly consider Pindar. As has always been known, the eschatological myth of Pindar's Second *Olympian Ode* of 476 BC for Theron of Acragas presents significant similarities with Empedocles. Empedocles' dates (490s to 430s BC) and aristocratic status make it likely that he was in the innermost circle of the "première" audience of Pindar's ode, in the terminology of Morrison.<sup>46</sup> Pindar is less clear than Plato on the geographical position and interrelations of the various locations he describes, I think deliberately. Humans apparently live on the surface of the earth, the realm of Zeus, above the underworld, with the second the site of an afterlife judgment, yet the issue is hardly closed. The identification of our world as Hades, as suggested by the *scholia*, might help with the vexed introductory section at lines 55–60, while, independently of that, the somewhat unusual reference to souls as *phrenes* may anticipate Empedocles.<sup>47</sup> Lastly, the mention of the "bright star, truest light for a man," ἀστὴρ ἀρίζηλος, ἐτυμώτατον / ἀνδρὶ φέγγος (55–56), made right before the myth, is especially suggestive.

All these issues deserve more detailed investigation, not possible here. What does seem certain for now is that the options in that afterlife are more varied than those found in other early Greek sources. At lines 61ff., Pindar describes an afterlife of optimal regularity, with clean lines and clear contrasts. Following a judgment delivered according to "hateful compulsion," the evil suffer "unwatchable toil" while the just lead "a tearless life" in a climate consisting of a temperate, eternal equinox. Lastly, Pindar describes a third fate (or perhaps level?) reserved for those who find permanent release from the greater alternation between mortal life and the stark regularities of the afterlife, those individuals who have succeeded in abstaining from all evil "three times in a row on each side," ἑστρίς / ἑκατέπωθι.<sup>48</sup> This makes explicit what was not obvious until this point, that there is not only survival into the afterlife, but also continuity into other lives. Pindar calls this final paradise the Isles of the Blessed, reached by "the road of Zeus past the tower of Kronos" (70). Although the geography remains blurry, we can still see the outlines of a three- or multi-level scheme: life with mixed bliss and suffering, an afterlife judgment leading to unmixed suffering or bliss, perhaps both only temporary, and then, for a select few, translation to divinity and final escape from reincarnation.

46. See Morrison 2007: 46–53. Accordingly, I take it that he will have shared in the mystic or esoteric meaning of the myth. On *Olympian* 2, see Lloyd-Jones 1990 and Wilcock 1995: 133–66. For afterlife cults, Currie 2005 ch. 14. I hope to revisit the myth and the comparison with Empedocles in more detail on another occasion.

47. For some guidance, Wilcock 1995: 155. Note in this respect the emphatic ἐνθαδὲ at line 57.

48. Following the standard reading, see von Fritz 1957. Is the reward of an upper or mid-level "tearless life" therefore only a respite? And is sin still possible there? It may seem unjust for the good to be sent back down to our world, but that much has to be assumed if there is to be progress from one mortal life to the next, as is implied by Pindar in fr. 130 and by Empedocles, and, most importantly, to mark out the superiority of the final escape from alternation. Compare the "philosophers' privilege" at *Phaedrus* 249a.



Let us now try to draw some conclusions from these two parallels. At a minimum, these texts show that a multi-level cosmic-eschatological scheme is conceivable for Empedocles and Pindar.<sup>49</sup> Beyond that, the historical relation of these schemes is a more delicate matter. A full discussion is not possible here, but certain continuities are too striking to ignore. Perhaps the most notable feature is that the geographical or cosmic levels corresponding to the merits of souls remain opaque or implicit in Pindar and Empedocles, to be teased out of ambiguities and allusions, while Plato is astonishingly precise and explicit—until he takes it all back in closing the myth at 114d. It looks as if in the earlier two authors, these ideas were new enough to be confined to allusions reserved for a circle of initiates, while Plato’s myth reads as his own explicit spelling out of these hints and riddles from the earlier tradition. In this respect, one especially intriguing continuity is that all three texts refer to the Isles of the Blessed. Pindar describes it as the final level, in fully anthropomorphic terms, while Plato limits himself to a pun at 111a. But the Isles of the Blessed are also implied in Empedocles: at B 115 the law of exile condemns the guilty to “wander away *from the blessed* for thirty thousand seasons,” τρίς μιν μυριάς ὄρας ἀπὸ μακάρων ἀλάλησθαι. All of this is likely to be related, somehow, to the early Pythagorean *akousma* that identifies the Moon and the Sun as the Isles of the Blessed (DK 58 C4 line 6). If, as Huffman has recently argued, the Pythagorean *akousmata* are not so much scientific in outlook as an attempt to inform the traditional world picture with a structure of punishments and rewards for souls, Empedocles by contrast certainly does offer a wholesale integration of cosmology with such punishments and rewards.<sup>50</sup> Equally unmistakable is that the life in Hades doctrine is shared between Plato and Empedocles (and Pindar, according to the *scholia*), along with its implied correlate of a fairer life above us. Indeed, one anomaly for Plato, if the soul is truly immaterial, is how it could be affected by physical elements at all, and why the purer upper regions should make any difference to it as claimed at 111b, compared to its more direct relevance for Empedocles and other Pre-Platonic thinkers.

What then are we to make of these continuities? In Plato’s case, unlike the other two authors, we can rely on considerations external to the myth such as the setting in Phlius, the mention of Philolaus (61d), and the conception of philosophy as “a preparation for death” as so many indications that Plato intends to paint Socrates’ death with Pythagorean colors. That in turn provides a good reason to think that, when we go back to the myth and tally up the other continuities just reviewed, however obscure they remain to us, we can advance beyond the minimum conclusion outlined above. Thanks to Plato, we have positive reasons to think that we are dealing

49. *Contra* Burkert 1972: 363: “But in Pindar’s exposition of metempsychosis there is no more trace of astral motifs than in Empedocles’ theory of the fallen *daimon* exiled to earth.” And 1972: 364: “Height and depth, fall and ascent do not become dominant ideas in the theology of the soul until the realm of the stars is taken in to become part of the picture.” At the time Burkert was seeking to purge the earliest Pythagorean tradition from anachronistic mathematical and astronomical doctrines. But see above for a distinction between the celestial afterlife and astrology.

50. On this background, see Picot 2008 and Huffman 2013 for Pythagoras and Philolaus.

with a Pythagorean tradition of some kind, if perhaps only at the level of literary representations.<sup>51</sup>

But even if we disregard that stronger claim, both texts still open the possibility that a multi-level scheme is historically plausible for Empedocles. This question, however, cannot be properly addressed until we have made a survey of Empedocles' cosmology. Before that, we still have one important item left in the case for life in Hades, section **d** of the Strasbourg papyrus of Empedocles.

### 3. SECTION D, LINES 5–10 OF THE STRASBOURG PAPYRUS: THE LAW OF EXILE

The importance of lines 5 to 10 of section **d** for the unity of Empedocles' thought was stated in the introduction. When the papyrus first appeared, the unambiguous eschatological content of these lines made it clear, once and for all, that the *On Nature* combined both themes of transmigration and Ionian science. As if to remove any final ambiguity, lines **d** 5 and 6 overlap with a previously known two-line fragment, B 139, which Porphyry, their source, explicitly relates to vegetarianism and purification for the sins of meat eating.<sup>52</sup> Indeed, the fragment was formerly attributed to the *Purifications* on that ground. As Martin and Primavesi saw correctly from the outset (1999: 114–19), the passage is the lynchpin for the unity of Empedocles' thought. My aim here is to go beyond that general point by showing, first, that the lines contribute specifically to the life in Hades doctrine, in so far as they express a direct relation between spiritual pollution and cosmic levels of life. Second, we will see that the text itself can be improved, and that one of these improvements strongly suggests that in section **d** Empedocles refers back to B 115 on the exile of the long-lived *daimones*. Two consequences in turn follow from this. On the level of doctrine, it consolidates the case for the unity of Empedocles' thought by showing that Empedocles returns to the account of the *daimones* after the presentation of the cosmic cycle and continued to develop it alongside his other teachings. In terms of the debate on the number of works, it shows that B 115 should henceforth be placed in the proem of the *On Nature*—to say nothing here of the single work hypothesis.

51. The notion of Empedoclean influence on the *Phaedo* myth is hardly new; see Burnet's 1911 *Phaedo* commentary. Rashed 2009 sees Aristophanes as the middle figure, who in the *Clouds* portrays Socrates as a Pythagorean, with Plato then attempting to out-Pythagoreanize him in his account of Socrates' death. See 2009: 108–16 for a compelling list of Empedoclean *comparanda* in Aristophanes.

52. *De abstinentia* 2.31, p. 161.13–20: "Since none is without sin, all that remains is for them to later be healed through purifications for their former sins of food. This would be like if one were to put the horrible deed before one's eyes and to cry out, in Empedocles' words: 'Woe that. . .'" The Empedoclean passage is a variation on Hesiod *Works and Days* 174–79.

A) THE LOCATION OF SECTION **d** AND THE STRUCTURE OF *ON NATURE* I

Of the four main continuous sections of the Strasbourg papyrus (**a**, **b**, **c**, and **d**), section **d** is the one whose location is most uncertain.<sup>53</sup> Nevertheless, because the location of its fellow-pieces can be secured, we have some reasonable grounds for speculation. Indeed, probably the second most important contribution of the papyrus, after the unity of Empedocles' thought, is the radical improvement it has made to our grasp of the contents of Book I of the *On Nature*. Accordingly, we can start with a statement of these known quantities.

Thanks to a lucky overlap of section **a** with the last lines of the 35-line fragment B 17, combined with an even luckier stichometric mark in the margin of that same section, it is possible to specify the content and exact location of what is now revealed to be Book I, lines 232–300 of the *On Nature*.<sup>54</sup> These lines contain what was most likely the main exposition of Empedocles' doctrine of the cosmic cycle and its relation to the elements (= *On Nature* 1.232–90), followed by a ten-line transition to what looks like biology or a discussion of the effects of Love and Strife on life (1.291–300). Five years after the initial publication of the papyrus, Janko 2004 argued that that same sequence could be extended down to line 308, when he showed on papyrological grounds that section **c**, which is itself poorly preserved but which overlaps with fragment B 20, was the top of the next column. If we imagine the ancient roll itself, which stood in regular 30-line columns, this produces a more or less continuous run of text starting from the bottom of column 8 and going on to the last line of column 10 (= line 300), plus, following Janko 2004, the top 8 lines of column 11. Finally, because Simplicius identifies a number of other fragments from Book I, sometimes also noting their relative order, we are in a position to make some educated guesses as to the remaining structure of Book I, far beyond what we can do for the other book(s).<sup>55</sup>

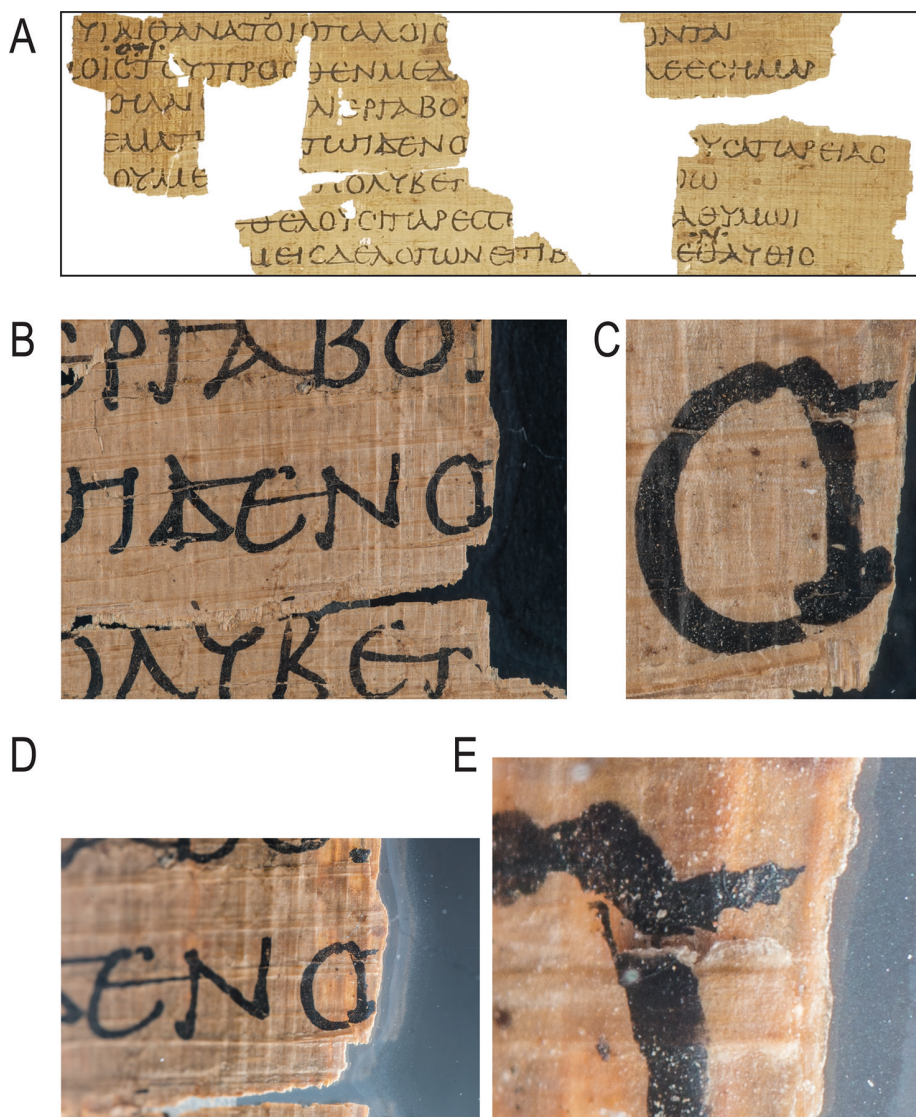
As already noted, the story is quite different for the 18 lines of section **d**. Because of the similarity of content between lines **d** 11–18 with B 62 on the origins of plants, known to be from Book II of the *On Nature*, Martin and Primavesi originally speculated that it belonged to that book. Against that, Janko 2004 proposed that section **d**, which covers the top 18 lines of its column, as well as **f** and **b**, should all three be placed in the next column (number 12) of the book roll. If correct, that would make section **d** lines 1.331 to 348 of the original, after a 22-line gap. The suggestion has not been generally accepted, although Primavesi

53. For the history of the papyrus' discovery, its reconstruction, and all other papyrological specifics, the reader should refer to Martin and Primavesi 1999, chapters I and II.

54. Section **a** contains 39 whole or partial hexameter lines spread over two columns (9 lines in **a(i)**, 30 in **a(ii)**) and overlaps with and continues fragment B 17, Empedocles' main exposition of the cosmic cycle. B 17 is securely identified as belonging to Book I of the *On Nature* by its source, the Aristotelian commentator Simplicius. In addition, the last line of section **a(ii)** contains a stichometric note showing it to be line 300 of the roll, which means that we can reconstruct B 17 plus section **a** as one continuous stretch of text; see M-P for all details.

55. See Trépanier 2003: 48–51 and Primavesi 2008b.

58. My translation follows Sedley's suggestion, via Osborne 2000: 336n.9 that **d** 10–11 are a promise to return later to the topic of the previous lines (reincarnation etc.) and not a transition signaling a resumption of the previous exposition as in M-P, Primavesi 2008b and Janko 2004.



**A** Cropped image of *P.Strasb. gr.* 1665-1666, section d, lines 4 to 10.

**B** New detail picture of lines 6-8, lit from above.

**C** Enlarged image of omicron from picture B.

**D** Detail picture of line 7, side-lit from the right.

**E** Enlarged image of top of omicron from D.

Photos et collection BNU Strasbourg

Fig. 1: Detail from section **d** of the Strasbourg papyrus of Empedocles (*P.Strasb. gr.* Inv. 1665–1666). Collection and photography courtesy of the Bibliothèque Nationale et Universitaire de Strasbourg, France.



σχέτλι' ἔργα βορᾶς περὶ χεῖλεσι μητίσασθαι **d** 7 ἐπὶ τῷδε νό[μωι κατέδ]ευσα *scripsi*, see Fig. 1. The reference is to B 115. On νόμος, Hippolytus 7.29.23: τοῦτον εἶναί φησιν ὁ Ἐμπεδοκλῆς νόμον μέγιστον τῆς τοῦ παντός διοικήσεως λέγων ὧδέ πως· “ἔστιν . . . ὄρκοις” (B 115 1–2), ἀνάγκην καλῶν τὴν ἐξ ἐνὸς εἰς πολλὰ κατὰ τὸ Νεῖκος καὶ ἐκ πολλῶν εἰς ἓν κατὰ τὴν Φιλίαν μεταβολήν; see Viték 2006 “ad B 115” and compare B 135 ἀλλὰ τὸ μὲν πάντων νόμιμον διὰ τ' εὐρυμέδοντος / αἰθέρος ἡνεκέως τέταται διὰ τ' ἀπλέτου ἀνγῆς. For ἐπὶ] cf. B 9.5 νόμωι δ' ἐπίφημι καὶ αὐτός with νόμωι in the same metrical *sedes*. It is unclear whether τῷδε or τῷ γε was written first [νῦν δ]ὲ μάτη[ν ἐν] τῷδε νότ[ωι M-P Primavesi 2011 μάτη[ν τοῦ]τωι γε νότ[ωι Janko 2004 **d** 8 ἐπιβ[η]σόμεθ' 1<sup>st</sup> hand, ἐπιβ[η]σόμεν 2<sup>nd</sup> hand between dots. πολυβενθ[έα χώρον] *scripsi* cf. B 121.1 ἀτερπέα χῶρον; for depth not applied to the sea or a harbor, cf. *Od.* 17.316–17 οὐ μὲν γάρ τι φύγεσκε βαθείης βένθεσιν ὕλης / κνώδαλον; perhaps also πολυβενθ[έ]ς σπεῖος], cf. B 120 ἡλύθομεν τόδ' ὑπ' ἄντρον ὑπόστεγον πολυβενθ[έα Δῖνον] Primavesi 2011 **d** 9 [ἡμῖν τ' οὐκ] ἐθέλουσι *scripsi* [μυρία τ' οὐκ] editors **d** 10 [ἔνθαδε νῦν· ἡ]μεῖς *scripsi*, cf. *Od.* 11.485–86 νῦν αὖτε μέγα κρατέεις νεκύεσσιν / ἐνθάδ' ἐών· ἀνθρώποις. ἡ]μεῖς δὲ editors

My text proposes two main new supplements. First, at **d** 7 I suggest ἐπὶ τῷδε νό[μωι “on account of this law” as the grounds for Empedocles’ tears, instead of νότ[ωι “storm” or “shower.” Second and largely following from the first, I suggest πολυβενθ[έα χώρον] “a very deep place” at line **d** 8 as more plausible than M-P’s πολυβενθ[έα Δῖνον] “very deep whirl.” A few other alternatives to the current text are given in **d** 9–10, which follow from the identification of the life in Hades motif, but of course cannot be used as evidence to support it. The first of these, however, is the most important.

#### C) THE LAW AT LINE **d** 7

At **d** 7, a small trace to the right of the omicron before the middle gap has led previous editors to see a ligature there, which would require the following letter to be either Π or T. The upward angle of the trace is more compatible with Π than T but neither can be ruled out.<sup>59</sup> Yet since there are no suitable words in Greek for the sequence NOΠ- the only alternative is to assume a tau, despite the imperfect

59. See OΠ at e 1, f 1. In the detail, note the low start-point of the purported ligature, moving up to the level of the crossbar. But the scribe’s practice when writing OT is to link, on a level line, the apex of the omicron and the crossbar of the tau; see **a(ii)** 6, **(ii)** 25 and contrast it with CT where the juncture of the two letters is signaled by a dip, **a(ii)** 15, **(ii)** 16, **d** 5, to disambiguate the two. The scribe’s practice in writing TO is largely consistent with this; see **a(ii)** 14, 17, 19, 24, 25, 26, 27, **b** 2, **c** 1, **c** 4, **d** 4, **d** 18, **f** 2; less so for ET or TE. In the case of OΠ he favors a flat line, only it can start lower; see **d** 4 θανάτοιοπάλ- in the top line of Fig. 1, A.



fit. The best that can be done if we keep tau is the proposed νότ[ωι “storm” or perhaps “shower” (understood: of tears) from νότος, the south wind. M-P 1999 had ἐν] τῷδε νότ[ωι “in this storm” as a reference to a cosmological storm of the elements, while Janko 2004 instead restores the line with a dative of accompaniment and equates νότος with moisture or water by metonymy: [νὺν δ]ἐ μάτη[ν τοῦ]τωι γε νότ[ωι κατέδ]ευσσα παρειάς, “Now to no end my cheeks I wet with tears.” Yet in both cases the resulting meaning is odd. Janko’s translation, we can also note, drops the figurative language needed to produce the meaning given in his translation. Lastly, νότος itself is not attested in Empedocles. Thus the final result is less than satisfactory, since we have an imperfect ligature forcing us to speculate upon a word that, at best, produces an odd meaning.

Let us therefore return to the source of the problem, the purported ligature. Is it an actual ligature? To the naked eye the trace does indeed look like one, but inspection by microscope in Strasbourg (autopsy on June 20th, 2013) showed that it was not so clear. Now, thanks to a new set of pictures given in Figure 1, the purported ligature can be revealed as a mere slip of the pen. The crucial point, well visible in Figure 1, detail E, is that the purported ligature does not reach the edge of the preserved surface of the papyrus, but tapers off well before it. Were it a ligature, one would expect the line to be of even thickness and reach to the edge of the surface. Nor is there any indication of any abrasions on the papyrus surface or any traces of ink having flaked off. Indeed, even if we were to admit the latter as a possibility, it would be hard to account for the conical taper of the end of the line.<sup>60</sup> As it is, the squiggle is more consistent with the pen being lifted off the page. What we have here is rather a slip or momentary hesitation, perhaps caused by the heavy horizontal papyrus strand running through the top third of the omicron. For comparison the reader can note an even heavier accidental squiggle in another omicron one line above ours, on the top left of the letter at **d** 6 βορ[ι], which no one would mistake for a ligature. Based on this new evidence I conclude that a ligature is either to be ruled out or at a minimum is very much less likely than a slip of the pen. When we add to it the further difficulties of making sense of the line with a word starting with νοτ-, the better choice is to consider what we can get if we start again from the extant ]τωι γε/δε νο[.

I propose: [νὺν δ]ἐ μάτη[ν ἐπὶ] τῷδε νό[μωι κατέδ]ευσσα παρειάς, “But now in vain have I drenched my cheeks on account of this law.” If we take the line as a whole, what Empedocles is saying, I suggest, is that his tears are in vain because what is done cannot be undone. For as far as the law is concerned, he

60. The *omicron* is executed in three strokes, although most of the time the scribe executes *omicron* in two. For the contrast, see the three omicrons at **d** 4 θανάτοιο πάλοι visible in the line above in A, not transcribed. The first two are more regular but the third is in three strokes. Here, the left side curves down in a large stroke from the top, but the bottom sweep is too wide for omicron and more suited to *epsilon*. (Perhaps the scribe mistakenly began to write an *epsilon*, then corrected himself?) Next we have two further strokes. From the bottom a right-side vertical stroke closes the loop, while the smallest stroke, top right, closes it from the top, then goes off to the right as the squiggle.

is guilty and the sentence of exile has already been enacted. As he explains in the next line, he and the addressee now find themselves in another location: “for we have come. . .” [ἐξικ]γούμε[θα γὰρ]. As for “law,” by it I mean the exile of the *daimones* from B 115 (though I am less certain about “this,” see below). For the hearer, the overall point of the passage is not so much to express despair as to urge Hesiodic resignation. Once we have recognized our poor lot, our life in Hades, we must work to escape it. This is the gloss given to the two lines as quoted by Porphyry (see n.52).

Having explained what I think it means, I start now on the narrower positive case for ἐπὶ τῷδε νόμῳ *in situ*. First, at the level of language and poetic diction, the term νόμος with ἐπὶ is already attested in the corpus at B 9.5, νόμῳ δ’ ἐπίφημι καὶ αὐτός, with νόμῳ in the same case and metrical *sedes*. In that line Empedocles states his willingness to abide by a linguistic convention or rule, even if it can mislead, but that is obviously not what he means here. To what rule or law could ἐπὶ τῷδε νόμῳ refer in d 7? As already suggested, based on context, an unambiguous reference to reincarnation and regret for the sin of meat-eating (d 6 “horrible deeds . . . for the sake of food”), almost certainly the reference is to the law of exile of the *daimones*.

While there is no other instance in our fragments of νόμος used to denote the law of exile, there is no inherent strain in the meaning and a great deal of supportive evidence for it having been so used. First (or once more) B 9 shows that there is no objection to the form itself. Second, a very close parallel for the meaning is found at B 135.1, where Empedocles uses “the rule for all (living?) things” as a close cognate. The “rule” of B 135 is the law that regulates reincarnation, as given by our source, Aristotle *Rhetoric* I 1373 b 6, who introduces the fragment as an illustration of a universal law:

. . . just as Empedocles says about not killing animals. For this, he says, is not just for some, and unjust for others, “But the law for all things (τὸ μὲν πάντων νόμιμον) extends continuously/through wide-ruling *aither* and boundless light. . . .”

This illustration of cosmic justice is a clear reference to the Pythagorean ban on animal sacrifice and hence to reincarnation. Fourth, the indirect evidence for νόμος as the term used by Empedocles for the law of exile is strong and abundant. To begin, Hippolytus *Refutation of all Heresies* 7.29.23, our main source for B 115, paraphrases B 115 as setting out the νόμος that regulates not only the banishment of the *daimones*, but also stands as a wide “law of the universe”:

This, says Empedocles, is the greatest law (νόμον μέγιστον) of the governance of the universe, speaking thus: “there is an oracle of necessity. . .” (B 115.1–2), calling necessity the alternation from one to many under Strife and from many to one under Love.

Although Hippolytus' quotation and paraphrase of B 115 are problematic in other respects, these do not affect the meaning of νόμος.<sup>61</sup> More importantly, a number of other secondary sources use νόμος as their chosen term to designate the law regulating the exile of *daimones*, which they equate with souls.<sup>62</sup>

To sum up, there are numerous grounds to think that ἐπὶ τῷδε νόμῳ (or perhaps τῷ γε) is what Empedocles wrote at d 7, and that by *nomos* he intends to denote the law governing the exile of the *daimones*.

#### D) THE POSITION OF SECTION d AND THE ATTRIBUTION OF B 115

But that is not all. From the case for νόμος itself, let us next consider the consequences of the supplement, if correct, for the position of section d and B 115 in the *On Nature*. To begin, it is obvious that d 7 presupposes, on the part of the hearer, some acquaintance with the law, which must therefore have been presented in the poem before this point. That is, d 7 is a reference *back* to the law of exile of the *daimones*. In this respect it is hard to overlook that although B 115 has long been the centerpiece of the *Purifications* for thematic reasons, the actual evidence for its location has always pointed to the *On Nature*. Plutarch at *De exilio* 607c tells us that the passage was made “as a proclamation at the beginning of his [Empedocles'] philosophy,” ἐν ἀρχῇ τῆς φιλοσοφίας προαναφωνήσας, where (on the assumption of two works) “philosophy” more likely means the *On Nature* than the *Purifications*. Next and independently of Plutarch, B 115 was also known to Simplicius, our main source of *On Nature* fragments, who quotes its first two lines at *In Phys.* 1184.9 and otherwise never so much as mentions the *Purifications*. Thus, even before the papyrus, the evidence favored a position for B 115 in the *On Nature*, and advocates of the two-work approach divide on the question.<sup>63</sup>

With respect to the position of section d, we have seen that the most economical assumption is that it will have stood later than but relatively close to sections a through c (= *On Nature* 1.232–308). That is, following Janko, section d will have

61. Hippolytus quotes and paraphrases B 115 in reverse order. Our passage, from the end of his discussion, sees him expanding its scope from the regulations of the exile and return of souls to the cosmic alternation of one and many. For discussion of the Platonist reception of Empedocles, see the modern authors listed in notes 12 and 66.

62. As argued in part 1, I think that the equation is justified. Some examples: Plutarch *De exilio* 607cd1, where Plutarch quotes part of B 115 and the soul φεύγει καὶ πλανᾶται θείοις ἐλαυνομένη δόγμασι καὶ νόμοις; Plotinus *Ennead* 4.8.1.18: Ἐμπεδοκλῆς τε εἰπὼν ἁμαρτανούσαις νόμον εἶναι ταῖς ψυχαῖς πεσεῖν ἐνταῦθα καὶ αὐτὸς φυγὰς θεόθεν γενόμενος ἤκειν πίονος μαινομένῳ νείκει τοσοῦτον παρεγύμνου; Porphyry in Stobaeus *Eclogae* 2.8.42; Synesius *De Providentia* 1.1.17. In Plato *Phaedrus* 248c2 θέσμος Ἀδρασείας is probably meant to be a recognizable gloss.

63. Those in favor of placing B 115 in the *On Nature* include most recently Van der Ben 1975; Sedley 1998: 8–10; Graham 2010 (= his F 8); for the *Purifications*: O'Brien 1981 and 2001; Gemelli Marciano 2013 no. 160; Primavesi in Mansfeld and Primavesi 2011 no. 8. As already pointed out by 19th-century editors prior to Diels such as Stein (1852) and Mullach (1853), in a didactic poem the establishment of a divine setting or authority for the teachings to come normally takes place in the opening sections, as in Hesiod's encounter with the Muses in the *Theogony* or Parmenides' mystic voyage to the goddess in the proem of his poem.

been column 12 of the roll (= *On Nature* 1.331–18) or if not that, then not much later than that in Book I. B 115 in turn, following Plutarch, more likely stood in the proem of the *On Nature* (Simplicius only implies that it belongs to *On Nature*), and so before *On Nature* 1.232–308. What happens when we factor in ἐπὶ τῷδε νόμῳ at line **d** 7? The dovetailing of this reference back to the law of exile with the testimony of Plutarch on the position of B 115 is too good to ignore. Taken together, the two strongly tilt the balance of evidence towards the conclusion that lines **d** 5 to 10 either presuppose, or perhaps refer directly back to fragment B 115 itself. In the other respect, the same link considerably strengthens Janko's case for the position of section **d** close after sections **a** and **c** (= *On Nature* 1.232–308).

Nevertheless, we are not completely home and dry yet. One difficulty for taking *nomos* as a specific reference to B 115 is the deictic τῷδε, which seems to imply that the reference is more proximate than that: “this (here) law,” not “that (there) law.” That is, τῷδε cannot refer to B 115, which if I am right on other grounds, must have stood at a minimum over one hundred lines before our passage. It must refer to something closer.<sup>64</sup> One way to solve or rather pre-empt the difficulty would simply be to choose the alternative reading τῷ γε. The line would then still make perfect sense, although the point of τῷ γε would be more concessive. I would then translate: “But it is in vain—at least as far as the law is concerned—that I have drenched my cheeks, / for we have come . . . .” The line would in that case still presuppose B 115, but it need not refer directly back to it. Nevertheless, since normal epic diction favors τῷδε, let me try to make the case for it as a possible reference to B 115.

First, as a textual counter-example I note a good parallel for a reference to earlier material with the same deictic form at B 21.1: ἀλλ' ἄγε, τῶνδ' ὁάρων προτέρων ἐπιμάρτυρα δέρκευ, “But come, look upon the witnesses of these earlier blandishments.” This is the transmitted text (retained in Viték 2006) but since not all editors follow it, I limit myself to pointing it out. Second, even if we grant that τῷδε must have a more proximate reference, can it really refer to a different law than B 115? The only available alternative object of reference would have to come from the four first lines of section **d**. Unfortunately, this is hard to test since the four preceding lines are difficult to make out, even though they are not that badly preserved. But, so far as we can tell, there is no reason to think that their content is incompatible with B 115. The conditions described in lines **d** 1–4 once again include “falling apart from one another and meeting their fate” (**d** 1), “hateful Necessity” (**d** 2), the “lots of death” (or perhaps escape from them?), as well as a mention of “Love.” These notions could all very well describe not another law, but simply a more detailed working out or explanation of the exile of souls that Empedocles first presented in B 115. Note in particular the recurrence of necessity.

64. I thank one of my anonymous readers for pointing this out, as did some members of the audience in Trier on Sept. 23rd, 2016. In the papyrus, it is not possible to make out which of τῷδε or τῷ γε was written first; see Fig. 1 picture B.

For a directly relevant example, we can compare the way in which Love and Strife, first presented over lines 1.232 to 289 regulating the elements and the cosmic cycle at its most universal, are next shown at *On Nature* 1.301–308/fragment B 20 controlling the alternation of the “wandering limbs” between one and many, life and death. On that last point, I note that at **d** 10 Empedocles concedes that the account is incomplete and that he will need to revisit it.<sup>65</sup> More broadly, Empedocles’ dominant expository mode is *proleptic*, that is, the main structural feature of his poetic presentation consists of repetitions with expansion and variations (see refs. in n.8). So here we can readily posit that an initial statement in B 115 about the “law of Necessity” regulating the exile of *daimones*, made at some point before *On Nature* 1.200 or so, is being now revisited and applied to more specific bodies and conditions at line 1.330 or so. Within that context, the phrase ἐπὶ τῷδε νόμῳ, “on account of this law,” used in the second iteration, most likely does not refer to a new, different law, but at most to a more definite or proximate expression of the same law.<sup>66</sup>

I conclude that whether we read τῷδε or τῷ γε at **d** 7, the line either directly refers back to B 115 or, at a minimum, presupposes it. Either way B 115 should henceforth be attributed to the proem of the *On Nature*.

#### E) LINE **d** 8: THE VERY DEEP PLACE AND LIFE IN HADES

We can be much briefer for line **d** 8 and the other supplements. First, the relevance of lines **d** 5–10 to the life in Hades doctrine is hard to deny. Even before any supplements to the text, the lines express a direct relation between spiritual purity or pollution and cosmic altitude. At **d** 8, in [ἐξικ]γούμε[θα γὰρ] the first person plural and the connective γάρ, link the speaker and his hearer together as both having reached new surroundings, while the preserved πολυβενθ[ι] implies that these lie at some depth. (The epithet πολυβενθής “very deep” in epic is usually applied to the sea or to harbors.) That these surroundings are sorrowful and unpleasant is given by the tears in **d** 6. Next, the nearly certain supplement in line **d** 9 ἄλγ'εα θυμῷ promises that much suffering awaits them there, and contains a likely hint at the soul in the last word of the line, θυμῷ, *heart* or *soul*, which specifies the locus of that suffering.<sup>67</sup> Thus, all within the scope of five lines, our passage

65. Again I take **d** 10 to be a promise to return to the topic of exile, and not, as in M-P, Primavesi and Janko, as a return to the topic of biology. Among the questions raised but left hanging by **d** 5–10, we could ask: Why does Empedocles wish that he had been *completely* destroyed? What does the reference to claws mean? Are the horrible deeds for food the reason he and the hearer were banished? Or is the *gar* merely explaining that eating meat is bad because they have come, already, to a place where that is a crime?

66. Something along these lines is suggested by Simplicius’ own attempt to explicate the principle of alternation in Empedocles as criticized by Aristotle, which culminates in a quotation of B 115; see the string of passages in Simplicius’ *Commentary on Aristotle’s Physics*, CIAG 10, 1183.21–1184.18, itself perhaps a quotation of Eudemus (= Inwood 2001, Context 20). Hippolytus’ relation of B 115 to “the most general law of cosmic alternation,” noted above, is a version of the same pattern.

67. The supplement has good epic parallels, ἄλγεα θυμῷ being how Achilles describes his sufferings at *Iliad* 9.321.

relates exile (for certain if we add *nomos*), suffering, and low cosmic altitude. Should any doubts remain, these are removed by Porphyry, who explicitly links the lines to purifications for the pollution of meat-eating (quoted n.52). As for the other supplements, whatever stood in the gap at line **d** 8 cannot be proven, but I offer πολυβενθ[έα χώρον], based on B 118 ἀσυνήθεα χῶρον and B 121.1 ἀτερπέα χῶρον.<sup>68</sup> Following from that, my proposal for the opening words of **d** 10 tries to identify the place of suffering as the here and now, ἐνθαδε νῦν, based on *Odyssey* 11.486, also set in Hades, but of course it has no evidential weight. Lastly, without making a full case for it, I reiterate that I take the future tense and the αὔθις at line **d** 10 as stating a promise to return to the topic of exile, and not, as in Martin and Primavesi 1999, Mansfeld and Primavesi 2011, and Janko 2004, as a return to the topic of biology.

#### 4. COSMOLOGY: THE THREE-LEVEL SCHEME AND THE LONG-LIVED GODS

With all of the above in mind, we can at last turn to Empedocles' cosmology. I start with a neutral outline of its structure, all the easier for the fact that most of the evidence is based on doxographical reports, not fragments.

##### A) EMPEDOCLES' COSMOLOGY

The testimonies describe a circular earth, probably spherical, possibly flat, held in the center within a larger closed shell. Empedocles compares the overall structure to an egg on account of its width being greater than its height (A 50). Other evidence suggests that the comparison should probably also be extended to the interior of the egg, with the earth as the yoke, surrounded by a translucent "white," the atmosphere. Precisely such a cosmic structure is found in testimony A 30, overlapped in part by A 49, which provides an account of its original formation. According to A 30, when the elements first began to separate and assert themselves, air or *aither* was the first to break away.<sup>69</sup> To this day it rushes around the periphery at great speed. A 30 next describes the separation of fire. As a result of that second separation, the topmost section of fire reacted with the air and created the glassy sky, the shell of the cosmos (A 51). Thereafter the two shared the

68. Based on B 120, I also think πολυβενθ[ἐς σπεῖος] "very deep cave" is attractive.

69. A 30: "He says that air was first separated off from the blend of the elements and poured round in a circle; after air, fire, springing out and having no other place [to go] springs out upwards [and lodges] under the solidified air. There are two hemispheres moving in a circle round the earth, the one wholly of fire, the other mixed from air and a little fire, which he thinks is night. The initial motion occurred from it so happening that a certain accumulation of fire caused it to start falling. The sun is not by nature fire, but a reflection of fire similar to that occurring off of water. The moon he says came together from air seized by fire. For this congeals just like hail. But it takes its light from the sun." Trans. Inwood 2001. See also *Phaedo* 99 b, Aristotle *De Caelo* 295 a16 and the texts collected under A 49 in Vitek 2006. This cosmogony follows upon the reign of Love, which Empedocles also terms the *Sphairos* god (B 27 to B 31), and it was initiated by Strife.



resulting closed space. In the space between the sky and earth, there is one hemisphere where fire dominates, another made up mostly of air with a little fire, and their rotation produces night and day. The motion began when fire first accumulated in the upper region so that the world grew top-heavy and began to fall over.

We can say a little more concerning the heavenly bodies and the earth. The stars are fire fixed into the glassy outer shell, while the planets or wandering stars are made of the same material, but glide in the upper air (A 53 and A 54). The sun is a concentration of light from the rotating hemisphere of fire; what we see is a concentrated (?) reflection, in the glassy sky, of the whole fiery hemisphere, shining off the vault of heaven. This apparent or reflected sun is the same size as the earth.<sup>70</sup> The moon is made of the same compacted glassy stuff as the shell of the sky, but contains no fire of its own and shines only by reflected light. The visible sun, as reflected on the outer shell, is “twice as far from the moon as the moon is from the earth” (A 61), the moon itself being so low that Plutarch says it is practically “cradled in the arms of the earth” and should be understood to belong to its shadowy realm (*De facie* 925 bc). Beneath that level, earth and water were last to separate. As we can infer from other fragments the separation of the elements is not complete: B 52 tells us that many fires (still) burn beneath the earth, while B 54 and B 55 imply the presence of air and water under the surface of the earth. But beyond these we have no extant passages to compare with the extensive interior anatomy of the earth found in the *Phaedo* myth. At most, in the previous zoogony of Love—we live in the world of rising Strife—Empedocles refers to the earth producing the first limb-mixtures within herself “in the perfect harbors of Kypriis” (B 98.3).

How then does this picture of the world relate to the different habitats of soul? With the exception of Kingsley 1995, the question has rarely been raised, let alone faced.<sup>71</sup> My answer, and the central thesis of this study, is that Empedocles’ cosmology and eschatology consistently presuppose one another, so that these habitats can be mapped onto the cosmos described above. Repeatedly, and from multiple angles, we find that Empedocles’ account of soul presupposes his cosmology, while his cosmology in turn confines his account of soul.

70. A 56, which distinguishes the true sun, the fire in the upper atmosphere, from the reflected sun, presents a more complicated picture, but to my mind the text has been misunderstood. The fire does not originate from the hemisphere of night, it simply rotates around the periphery (A 49: “Empedocles says that the circuit of the sun is an outline of the limit of the cosmos”) as described in A 30. The visible sun is the fire reflected down to us, probably having been concentrated into a smaller disk by the concave glassy shell of the sky. The implausibility that we cannot see the whole hemisphere of fire is the very complaint made of the scheme by Aristotle and Theophrastus; see Viték A 57. In A 30 the reflection is like looking at the sun on the surface of water. For earlier interpretations, Guthrie 1965: 190–200; Bollack 1965–1969: vol ii numbers 320–78; Furley 1987: 93–94; Wright 1995: 201–202; Kingsley 1994a: 316–24 and 1995 ch. 5, who advocates Pythagorean central fire as the yoke of the cosmic egg. See rather Huffman 2007.

71. But Kingsley ignores much of the evidence and forces the remainder to fit his focus on Pythagorean central fire. Alternately, as already noted, Primavesi 2008a calls the exile of the soul a myth or an allegory of the (macro-) cosmic cycle.

B) THE THREE-LEVEL SCHEME: DIVINE NAMES AND THE STRUCTURE OF THE COSMOS

In the fragments Empedocles suggests links between the structure of the cosmos and the habitats of soul in two main ways: the application of Olympian names to cosmic phenomena on the one hand and suggestive epithets and metaphors applied to gods on the other. Overall, the doxography suggests a tendency to rely on Olympian names for the elements, while more personal divinities are left anonymous. This seems borne out in practice, as we will see, and may be a partial answer to the reductionist approach criticized in part one. Otherwise, the doxography deliberately ignores Empedocles' ascriptions of thought and volition to the elements, his "hylozoism."<sup>72</sup> This subsection considers divine names, then some eschatological passages that rely upon these names. The epithets of the anonymous gods I will consider next and last. In both cases, however, I rely for my framework on the cosmic structure described above in the doxography.

To begin, the main divisions of the world are described via the use of Olympian names. B 6 is the key passage:

τέσσαρα γὰρ πάντων ριζώματα πρῶτον ἄκουε·  
 Ζεὺς ἀργῆς Ἥρη τε φερέσβιος ἡδ' Αἰδωνεύς  
 Νῆστις θ', ἥ δακρύοις τέγγει κρούνῳμα βρότειον.

Hear first the four roots of all things:  
 Bright Zeus and Life-giving Hera, then Aidoneus  
 and Nestis, who waters the mortal well with tears.<sup>73</sup>

The exact correspondences of these names were disputed in antiquity. While Zeus is fire most of the time, but Hephaestus twice at B 96 and B 98, and Nestis always water, alternative interpretations are given for Hera and Aidoneus (Hades). One strand, Aëtius, identifies Hera with air and Hades with earth. Another tradition, attested in Hippolytus and Stobaeus, equates Hera with earth and Hades with air. The cosmological structure described above supports Aëtius (Hera = air, Aidoneus = earth) over the alternative, and it is the one I adopt.<sup>74</sup> If we follow Aëtius, moreover, and are also willing to identify Nestis with Persephone, this

72. The sources of this tendency can be traced back directly to Aristotle and Theophrastus, who had no patience for panpsychism or hylozoism. Indeed, Empedocles is often Aristotle's star example when he wants to attack the view; see *De Anima* 404b12 and 410b1–15. Otherwise, it is not as if Aristotle is fully successful in excluding hylozoism from his system; see Lloyd 2007. Compare also Theophrastus *De Sensibus* 13, where, in discussing Empedocles' account of vision, he asks: "if fire within the eye is that by which we see, does the fire outside the eye also perceive?"

73. My translation is intended to be neutral, but I have some trouble making out Empedocles' imagery. Does Nestis/water wet the source with her tears? But whatever the case, Nestis is the ultimate origin for the tears in mortal eyes.

74. See A 33, and the table in Wright 1995: 23. Kingsley 1994b is answered by Mansfeld 1995. Philodemus *De Pietate* 2, Vitek 2006 A 33<sup>4</sup> provides early support for Aëtius (Zeus = fire, Hera = air). In agreement with section 2, I think that the other strand (air = Hades) is later and of Stoic origin. On air vs. *aither* see now Shaw 2014.

neatly squares two established mythic couples as pairs demarcating upper and lower strata of the cosmos. The emphasis on tears identifies Nestis as water but must also denote the sorrow that is life in Hades. As suggested by the doxography, Nestis and Hades occupy the center, the yoke of the egg, while Zeus and Hera comprise the translucent atmosphere, the white.

Next, at B 44 Empedocles calls the glassy shell of the world Olympus, where the sun is said to glare directly at or off it: “he shines against (or off) Olympus (ἀνταυγεῖ πρὸς Ὀλυμπον) with fearless countenance.”<sup>75</sup> The name Olympus for the vault of heaven, also used by Parmenides in his cosmology at B 11, is highly significant: it is a way of suggesting that it the home of the gods.<sup>76</sup>

More detailed still are the structural implications embedded in B 21.1–6:

ἀλλ’ ἄγε, τῶνδ’ ὅρων προτέρων ἐπιμάρτυρα δέρκευ,  
εἴ τι καὶ ἐν προτέροισι λιπόξυλον ἔπλετο μορφῇ,  
ἥελιον μὲν λευκὸν ὄραν καὶ θερμὸν ἀπάντηι,  
ἄμβροτα δ’ ὅσ’ εἶδει τε καὶ ἀργέτι δεύεται αὐγῇ,  
ὄμβρον δ’ ἐν πᾶσι δνοφόμεντά τε ῥιγαλέον τε·  
ἐκ δ’ αἴης προρέουσι θελεμνά τε καὶ στερεωπά.

But come, look upon the witnesses of these earlier blandishments  
if anything in my previous words was lacking in detail:  
the sun, white to look upon and everywhere warm  
and the immortals, as many as are awash in warmth and bright glow,  
and rain, in all things both dark and cold  
while from earth flow things heavy (?) and solid.

The passage is given to illustrate the presence of the elements underlying all phenomena, and the four elements are evoked by having the hearer consider their most conspicuous cosmic manifestations. These are given in a *vertical* sequence that matches B 6. Line 3 mentions the white and hot sun at the top (strictly, as reflected in the glassy vault of sky), line 5 mentions water, via rain, and line 6 names earth directly, at the bottom or rather center. By default this leaves line 4 to air, either second from the top or perhaps sharing the top, as the half hemisphere of night (see above). But instead of naming air or night, Empedocles speaks of “the immortals, as many as are awash in warmth and bright glow,” ἄμβροτα δ’ ὅσ’ εἶδει τε καὶ ἀργέτι δεύεται αὐγῇ. What or who are they?

The neuter plural used to denote them is impersonal, but their designation as immortals strikes the opposite note. More certainly, their connection with air and

75. Kingsley 1994b: 323 argues that *antaugei* is simply “to shine,” not “reflects.” But maybe “reflects” is right; see n. 70.

76. Parmenides B 11: πῶς γαῖα καὶ ἥλιος ἡδὲ σελήνη / αἰθήρ τε ξυνὸς γάλα τ’ οὐράνιον καὶ ὄλυμπος / ἔσχατος ἡδ’ ἄστρον θερμὸν μένος ὠρμήθησαν / γίγνεσθαι. Cicero *De natura deorum* 1.28 reports that he called the stars gods or divine. Philolaus, at least according to Aëtius DK 44 A 6 (= Aëtius 2.7.7), also called the outer limit of the cosmos Olympus, but the most recent editor, Huffman 1993: 395–400, rejects this testimony.

their position in the scheme indicate a broad “meteoric” to heavenly range, going from clouds to the moon, planets, and stars. Once more, it is surely not accidental that in the doxography all of these bodies are defined, without exception, as combinations of air and light/fire.<sup>77</sup> This stratification seems all the more systematic for the fact that the top and bottom bodies of the celestial zone, the sun and moon, have an inverse ratio of air and fire: the moon is really just glassy air, without any fire or light of its own, while the sun is really only fire, but concentrated and made visible by its reflection off the glassy vault of congealed air. As manifestations, however, both are combinations of the two. This inversion may even serve to demarcate the boundary of this domain, as indicated by another passage, B 38. That passage lists moist air (ὕγρὸς ἀήρ) along with earth and sea in line 3, while line 4 mentions “Titan” (fire?) and αἰθήρ as a pair above them. The clouds of course must contain water, but they also contain some fire, which occasionally bursts forth as lightning (A 63). This is perhaps a function of their liminal status. But otherwise all of the bodies above the clouds are the “offspring” of Hera/air and Zeus/fire alone.

Here then we find the grounds for Plutarch’s claim noted in part two that purified souls, according to Empedocles, regain their natural place and rank (*De Iside et Osiride* 361c). The upper atmosphere, home to the celestial bodies made of air and fire, is the most appropriate Empedoclean home for a “mixture of fire and air” as found in B 9.1. So understood, the ἄμβροτα of B 21.4 are thus the likeliest predecessors in the tradition to the *aither*-dwellers of the *Phaedo* myth, or the stars, or both.<sup>78</sup> More importantly, however, such elemental compatibility between souls and their heavenly habitat is surely an original Empedoclean design. In particular, the low Empedoclean moon, only one third of the way up to the vault of heaven (A 61), makes it the natural threshold into the heavenly realm. Indeed, if this division between the locations of moon and heaven is as spatially demarcated as A 61 claims, then perhaps Plutarch’s phrase at *De exilio* 607d, “exchanging heaven and moon for earth and life on earth,” denotes *three* specific levels: heaven, moon, and earth. And if so, then for the very top of this scale, the term Olympus applied to the vault of heaven implies a distinct population for that distinct location, the stars. The fixed stars are fiery, but lodged in the glassy vault of heaven (A 53 and 54);

77. See above. For the full range of such phenomena, see Mourelatos 2008 on Xenophanes, where they are all related to air, but as suggested at 159, possibly also to be identified with Xenophanes’ one great god. For a full survey of past interpretations of B 21.4, see Picot 2014, who opts for clouds for ἄμβροτα. This adjective, famously, is the one Empedocles applies to himself in B 112.4: ἐγὼ δ’ ὕμιν θεὸς ἄμβροτος, οὐκέτι θνητός, “But I, to you a deathless god, no longer mortal. . . .”

78. The play on “light” φάος/φῶς and “man” φῶς in B 9.1 is preceded by Parmenides B 14, on the moon’s borrowed light, ἀλλότριον φῶς, repeated verbatim by Empedocles in B 45, both being ultimately inspired by *Odyssey* 18.219, ἀλλότριος φῶς, “foreign man.” In Parmenides the pun expresses the moon’s dependence on the sun, but it might also function as Parmenidean-Pythagorean allusion to the exile of the soul (as Parmenidean-doxa fire?) fallen from its original heavenly home. For a survey of this background, Macfarlane 2013, sections 4 and 5.

compare Lucretius *DRN* 5.1204–1205: *nam cum suspicimus magni caelestia mundi / templa super stellisque micantibus aethera fixum*, “for when we look up at the heavenly plains / of the great world and the aether studded with shining stars.” The Lucretian description appears to evoke Empedocles, while the choice of *templa*, “plain,” may allude to both Empedocles and the Platonic plain of Truth from the *Phaedrus* myth. In light of the other evidence reviewed above, I submit that it is more plausible to recognize the historicity of this scheme than that the heavenly afterlife was fathered upon Empedocles by later authors.

This in turn raises a cardinal question for the relation between the life-and-afterlife scheme and Empedocles’ cosmology: is Olympus, the glassy shell of the world, the roof of the cave from fragment B 120 (“we have come to this roofed cavern,” ἡλύθομεν τόδ’ ὑπ’ ἄντρον ὑπόστεγον)? Plotinus and Porphyry assert their identity, although Porphyry is thinking of an Empedoclean precedent for the allegory of the cave in the *Republic* rather than the *Phaedo* myth.<sup>79</sup> I believe that Plotinus and Porphyry are right, but do not rest my case solely on their testimony. The identification is enough, however, when combined with our other sources, to reinforce the likelihood that Empedocles has a *three*-level cosmic scheme: Hades and Nestis, earth and water, occupy the center; Zeus and Hera, fire and air, make up the atmosphere; while Olympus, the glassy shell of the cosmos, is the home or seat of the star-gods.

Admittedly, this still leaves frustratingly unclear the nature of that top level. We will return to it below, but for now this three-part scheme allows us to make the best sense of a number of eschatological passages. First of these is B 142:

τὸν δ’ οὐτ’ ἄρ τε Διὸς τέγεοι δόμοι αἰγ[λήεντος  
οὔ]τε τ[ί] π[ι]νι Ἀΐδου δέ[χεται πυ]κι[νό]ν στέγος [ἔν]δ[ον]

As for him, neither the covered halls of gleaming Zeus  
nor, especially, the dense covering of Hades admits him within.

The passage is preserved on a Herculaneum papyrus from a work by Demetrius Lacon who quotes B 142 to make a grammatical point.<sup>80</sup> On account of its content, the closest parallel for it is B 129. In B 129 Empedocles describes an unnamed individual capable of feats of superhuman recollection, who is usually identified as Pythagoras. In B 142, the two areas or levels into which the subject is not admitted are denoted by the verb δέ[χεται], a plausible supplement, used in B 115 to

79. At *Ennead* 4.8.1.33–37 Plotinus refers to the cave as τόδε τὸ πᾶν, and a page later equates this with κόσμος. Porphyry uses only κόσμος: *De Antro nympharum* 8 p. 61, 17–21 ed. Nauck. For a distinction between the two in the doxography, A 47: “Empedocles says that the cosmos is one, but that the cosmos is not the universe (τὸ πᾶν), but only a small part of the universe, and that the rest is unused matter (τὸ δὲ λοιπὸν ἀργὴν ὕλην).” The testimony is problematic; see Furley 1987: 89–90.

80. I follow Martin 2003 but tentatively attribute the adjective αἰγ[λήεις], in epic usually applied to Olympus itself, directly to Zeus; cf. B 6 Ζεὺς ἀργῆς. But the equally traditional αἰγ[ιόχοιο] is also attractive as a “shield of heaven.” See Vitek 2006 for all conjectures, whom I follow for [ἔν]δ[ον].

describe the elements “admitting” the wandering *daimon* to their respective domains. Since Demetrius is illustrating a case where one verb can be supplied by another via brachyology, the verb in the first line is easily understood from δέχεται in the second. Both of the regions that B 142 describes are that of Zeus (and implicitly Hera) or the upper air, and the “dense covering of Hades,” that is, earth and water (Nestis) at the center. One notable detail in the description is that the halls of Zeus are said to be “covered,” surely a reference to the glassy vault of heaven. The key point is that, since the individual is no longer to be found either on the surface of the earth or in the atmosphere, this leaves only Olympus as his place of residence. Whether or not he was Pythagoras, the implication is that he has now gone to his reward outside this world.

Next, we can consider B 115.9–11. If B 142 describes an ascent, the full circuit seems to be what is presupposed at B 115.9–11, where the exile of the long-lived *daimones* starts and ends in the upper realm, going from *aither* down to earth and water and then back up to the sun (fire) and *aither*:

αἰθέριον μὲν γάρ σφε μένος πόντονδε διώκει,  
πόντος δ' ἐς χθονὸς οὐδ' ἀπέπτυσσε, γαῖα δ' ἐς αὐγὰς  
ἡελίου φαέθοντος, ὃ δ' αἰθέρος ἔμβαλε δίναις.

For the might of the *aither* pursues him to the sea,  
sea spits him onto the threshold of earth, and earth  
into the gleams of flashing sun, who throws him into the whorls  
of *aither*.

If this assumes the same subdivisions of the cosmos described above, the implication is that, so long as their exile lasts, the *daimones* are confined to circulate within the elemental layers of earth and atmosphere, but are still excluded from the topmost vault of heaven. Here once again the literary form is significant, since it places earth and water together in the center, while air and fire occupy the outer regions.

Both B 142 and B 115 in turn can be related to fragment B 135 from Aristotle, already mentioned above, who relates it directly to the ban on meat eating. The lines specify that the jurisdiction of the law, which I identified with the *psephisma* of B 115, extends beyond the earth all the way into the upper atmosphere:

ἀλλὰ τὸ μὲν πάντων νόμιμον διὰ τ' εὐρυμέδοντος  
αἰθέρος ἡνεκέως τέταται διὰ τ' ἀπλέτου αὐγῆς. . . .

But the law for all things extends continuously  
through wide-ruling *aither* and boundless light. . . .

The point of B 135 would be that until their final escape, the *daimones*, including those that inhabit the atmosphere above us, are still subject to the universal law and so liable to fall. This is confirmed by later quotations and glosses of B 135, which



stress the cosmic community of justice between animals, men, and gods.<sup>81</sup> More assuredly, Empedocles B 135 presupposes, quite exactly, the two upper hemispheres of night (αἰθέρος/Hera) and day or fire (αὐγῆς/Zeus) from the cosmology.

Although this is not the whole case, these multiple correlations already show the consistency of Empedocles' conception. The evidence suggests a deliberate design, in which life extends through three distinct cosmic habitats of soul: there is the level of earth and water, Hades and Nestis, home to mortals; above it are the two hemispheres of fire and air, Zeus and Hera, the level of the *daimones* or *aither*-dwellers; while at the top or outer limit we have Olympus, the celestial vault and home of the gods.

### C) LONG-LIVED GODS AND THE STARS

This leads to my second set of links between cosmology and levels of life, Empedoclean epithets and metaphors applied to the gods. Here as well we find a three-level scheme presupposed, although the evidence for this top level is more sparse and any conclusions more tentative.

We recall from part one that the most common Empedoclean epithets for gods are δολιχαίωνες, “long-lived” and τιμῆσι φέριστοι, “mightiest in honors.” There we also saw that that second epithet recurs in fragment B 146, the description of the apotheosis following the final stages of reincarnation. By reusing it in that way, Empedocles thereby identifies these cosmic “gods of long life” with the top level of the scheme of reincarnation. What we did not note in part one is that there are good reasons to think that B 146 itself is only part of a longer fragment, whose sequel is B 147. Like B 146, B 147 is cited by Clement of Alexandria (ca. 150 to 216 CE), but not in the same books of the Church father's *Stromateis*. Despite these different locations, parts of Clement's comments suggest a common origin for both, and I follow most recent editors who run B 146 and B 147 together. To allow readers to judge, I quote Clement's introduction to B 146 along with the last line of the fragment, followed by his introduction and quotation of B 147.

*Stromateis*. 4.23.150: Empedocles says that the souls of the wise become gods

(lines 1 and 2 omitted)

ἐνθεν ἀναβλαστοῦσι θεοὶ τιμῆσι φέριστοι.

Whence they sprout into gods, mightiest in honors.

*Stromateis* 5.14.122: If we live holy and just lives, we are then blessed thereafter, and more blessed still after the release from down here (μακαριώτεροι δὲ μετὰ τὴν ἐνθένδε ἀπαλλαγὴν), obtaining happiness for

81. This is comparable to the situation in Parmenides' proem (B 1.14), where *Dike*, Justice, holds the keys of alternation and acts as a cosmic gatekeeper to the “beyond” where the *kouros* meets the goddess, provided (and controversially) one reads the proem as an ascent.

no given time, but able to rest for all time “sharing. . .,” says the philosophical poetry of Empedocles:

ἀθανάτοις ἄλλοισιν ὀμέστιοι, αὐτοτράπεζοι  
ἀνδρείων ἀχέων ἀπόκληροὶ ἐόντες, ἀτειρεῖς.<sup>82</sup>

sharing hearth and table with other immortals,  
without any allotment of human griefs, unwearied.

Clement’s second paraphrase is the most significant. Unlike the first, which is limited to the more basic opposition of mortal to immortal, the second shows that the passage to divinity in fact involves three levels. First he says that the reward for a holy and just life is “being blessed,” then Clement contrasts that with a still “more blessed” state upon transferral from “down here,” which he understands in Platonist terms as eternal salvation (note “all time”). Even so, his comments make it clear that, on the one hand, he—or more likely his source—presupposes three degrees of life and, on the other, that the gods of B 146–147, taken together, represent the final ascent to enduring happiness. Following the reconstruction offered above, the simplest explanation for these three degrees of life is that they correspond to the three habitats of soul: life in Hades, then the *aither*-dwelling *daimones* above but still within this world (cf. Hippolytus *Refutatio* 1.3 on *daimones* above), while the most meritorious of all escape further incarnation by passing into or beyond the glassy vault of heaven, the cave. If so, then the most plausible inference from this correspondence is that the enigmatic terms of B 147 are best understood as so many Empedoclean hints at astral apotheosis. I take it that becoming a star would mean escape from incarnation until the end of this world, according to the limits set by the cosmic cycle. What this final section will investigate, therefore, is whether astral life is compatible with the attributes outlined in B 146 and B 147 or, better still, helps to explain them.<sup>83</sup>

Rather than turning to these directly, however, in order to complete our review of the evidence for Empedoclean long-lived gods we must start by revisiting B 134. This fragment, already discussed in part one, is the fullest positive account we have of an Empedoclean god in its cosmic habitat. Of our two main sources for B 134, Tzetzes quotes it as from Book 3 of what he calls the *Physics* (*Chiliades* 7.522–26), while Ammonius (*De Interpr.* 249, 1 Busse), tells us that the god in question is Apollo, but also maintains that the example is meant to provide a general definition of a god. He writes,

82. The received text has ἐόντες ἀνδρείων ἀχέων ἀπόκληροὶ, ἀτειρεῖς. Editors divide between printing it or shifting the participle as above; see Vitek 2006 for options. Perhaps a less violent remedy might be θεῖοντ(α) ἀνδρείων ἀχέων ἀπόκληροὶ, ἀτειρεῖς (?) with θεῖοντα, “running,” an etymologizing reference to *theoi*; compare Aristotle’s etymology of *aither* as always (*aiei*) running (*thei*) at *De Caelo* 271a23. On neuter plural participles alongside masculine plurals, cf. διαλλάσσοντα and ἀκίνητοι at B 17.13–14.

83. For a survey of earlier attempts to make sense of B 146–147, O’Brien 1995: 443–52 and, for a very different interpretation of the material, O’Brien 2006.

“in the same way, concerning the divine as a whole (περὶ τοῦ θεοῦ παντὸς), he makes a general assertion”:

οὐδὲ γὰρ ἀνδρομέῃ κεφαλῇ κατὰ γυῖα κέκασται,  
οὐ μὲν ἀπαι νώτοιο δύο κλάδοι αἰσσονται,  
οὐ πόδες, οὐ θοὰ γοῦν(α), οὐ μήδεα λαχνήεντα,  
ἀλλὰ φρήν ἱερὴ καὶ ἀθέσφατος ἔπλετο μοῦνον,  
φροντίσι κόσμον ἅπαντα καταΐσσουσα θοῇσιν.

For it is not fitted with a human head along its limbs,  
nor do two branches shoot out from its back,  
nor feet, nor swift knees, nor hairy genitals;  
it is nothing but a holy and ineffable *phren*,  
soaring through the whole cosmos on swift thoughts.

The god is not declared to be spherical in so many words, but Empedocles’ negation of limbs for it is on a verbal level very close to the description of the *Sphairos*-god in B 28–29. This association encourages us to think of the holy *phren* as spherical, like a star or other heavenly bodies. In other respects, as argued in part one, the designation of the god as a separate organ of thought connects it to embodied life, although the scale of the god’s motion, which encompasses “the whole cosmos” shows equally clearly that it surpasses anything on our level.

Nevertheless, it remains unclear whether the holy *phren* should be understood as inhabiting merely the upper reaches of our world, or if it belongs at the very top, among the stars. The term “god” used by our sources favors the top level, as does the verb “soaring,” καταΐσσουσα, although it is not strictly rotational. One example of such rotational motion is found at B 41 where the sun “circulates about the great sky,” μέγαν οὐρανὸν ἀμφιπολεύει. In that case, however, it is noteworthy that the sun itself belongs to our world, not outside it. If we turn to parallels outside Empedocles for help, a passage from the *Phaedrus*, 246b6–c1 from the opening of the myth, offers a description that is very close to the soaring holy *phren*, stressing the cosmic range of soul yet without restricting its activity to rotational motion or its altitude to the top stellar level:

All soul has the care of all that is inanimate, and circulates about the whole universe, entering into different forms at different times (πάντα δὲ οὐρανὸν περιπολεῖ, ἄλλοτ’ ἐν ἄλλοις εἶδεσι γιγνομένη). Thus when it is perfect and winged it journeys on high and controls the whole world (μετεωροπορεῖ τε καὶ πάντα τὸν κόσμον διοικεῖ).

trans. Hackforth 1952, with modifications.

In Plato, the mention of incarnation and the choice of the term μετεωροπορεῖ, more suitable to an *aither*-dweller than a star, may argue for the second

level.<sup>84</sup> But even if it is not completely in orbit, the holy *phren*'s cruising altitude must remain at a minimum meteoric.<sup>85</sup>

From B 134, let us now return to the description of the gods at B 146–147. Among these attributes, perhaps the easiest to account for now, thanks to the papyrus, is B 147.2, ἀνδρείων ἀχέων ἀπόκληροι, which we can contrast with the “lots of death,” θανάτοιο πάλοι, at section d 4, not quoted above. This exclusion from the “lottery” of death must signal the final escape from reincarnation and its attendant vicissitudes, at least for this turn of the cycle. I suggest therefore that it supports an identification with the third level of life even if the phrase itself is not particularly astral. Much more so, however, is the final word of the line, the adjective ἀτειρεῖς, “unwearied.” In epic it usually describes brass or iron (*LSJ*), but in Empedocles the term is frequently associated with light or fire. At B 84.6 it is used of the shafts of light in the eye, while at B 86 it describes the eyes directly. The most relevant instance of all now occurs in the Strasbourg papyrus, section d 11–13, where the term is applied directly to fire, in the same metrical position and in what appears to be a zoogonic context: “But when it so happened that an inextinguishable flame (φ[λογ]μὸς ἀτειρής), / [ . . . ] leading upwards a much-suffering mixture / [ . . . ] life-giving were begotten.”<sup>86</sup> In the papyrus, this same fire a few lines later at d 15 goes “to the furthest place,” εἰς τόπον ἔσχατι[ον β]ῆι. This shows that, while ἀτειρής in B 147 remains an apt term for the ease of divine life in general, as reflected in Clement’s comments about rest, its specific Empedoclean connection to fire means the term can also serve to denote life at the top cosmic level, as fiery star-gods.

This then gets us as far as the terms used in B 147.2, but still leaves the more mysterious B 147.1, “sharing hearth and table with other immortals,” ἀθανάτοις ἄλλοισιν ὁμέστιοι, αὐτοτράπεζοι. Mention of shared hearths and tables obviously plays upon the traditional theme of the feasts of the gods, but since Empedocles

84. More narrowly, note how easily Plato’s prose here turns into hexameters. If one substitutes ἀμφι- for περι- in οὐρανὸν περιπολεῖ, we get a half hexameter, οὐρανὸν ἀμφοπολεῖ; cf. B 41 on the sun quoted above. Note also the sequence of dactyls and spondees (but no mid-line caesura) in ἄλλοις εἶδεσι γιγνομένη.

85. Another if very tentative reason for aligning B 134 with the top level comes from Plato’s description of the final level in the *Phaedo* myth, which looks like an attempt to cap B 134. Whereas the *holy phren* is freed from “a body,” understood as a collection of organs, it is still a material, extended body. By contrast, the elite among Plato’s *aither*-dwellers will be promoted to a life “without any bodies *at all* from thereafter,” ἄνευ τε σωμάτων ζῶσι τὸ παράπαν εἰς τὸν ἔπειτα χρόνον. This recalls the new Platonic metaphysics introduced by the dialogue, which Plato sometimes appears to embrace in his account of soul, especially in the argument for affinity between soul and the forms.

86. Text after M-P: [5 letters ἀλλ’ ὅτ]ε δὴ συνετύγχανε φ[λογ]μὸς ἀτειρής / [c. 12 letters] εἰς ἀνάγων π[ο]λυπῆ[μο]να κρᾶσιν / [c. 13 letters] αὐτοτράπεζοι τεκνώθη[ν]σαν. For further textual work on section d, see Janko 2004, Primavesi 2008b, Rashed 2011, Primavesi in Mansfeld and Primavesi 2011, Trépanier 2018b. As M-P recognized, the passage is thematically close to fragment B 62 on the separating agency of fire: at B 62.5 fire “sends up” the shoots of plants as the result of fire “wanting to rejoin its like” (τοὺς μὲν πῦρ ἀνέπεμπε θέλον πρὸς ὁμοῖον ἰκέσθαι), no doubt the heavenly fire of the upper hemisphere of day. In the papyrus, the description of that life-form as a “much-suffering mixture,” I take as a further instance of the life-in-Hades doctrine. But what is the much suffering-*kra-sis* being “led up”? A plant? A soul?

rejects anthropomorphic gods (see B 134), we are obliged to find some other way to understand these hearths and tables. First, if the gods of B 146–147 are stars or inhabit the stars, then ὁμέσσιοι, in its reference to a hearth shared by a multitude of star-gods (or each having its own fire or hearth?), should probably be understood as a Pythagorean-styled reference to the sun, the cosmic hearth, which in B 44 glares directly at star-studded Olympus. Philolaus, for example, calls his central fire Hestia (DK 44 B 7). Beyond that, some further guesses are possible, but this is where the evidence becomes so thin that we would have to fall back on parallels outside Empedocles and enlist Plato to help us make sense of these images. As was the case for B 134 above, the richest source of these is the *Phaedrus* myth. At this late stage, however, a full study of the *Phaedrus* myth is out of the question, while, in another respect, these parallels are so extensive that they deserve separate study.<sup>87</sup>

Accordingly, to close this section and this study, I propose a single passage from the myth that provides a good parallel to support reading B 147.1 as a reference to stars. The passage is *Phaedrus* 246e–247c, Plato’s description of the blessed life of the gods and their ascent to the divine feasts in the supracelestial realm:

But at such times as they go to their feasting and banquet, behold they climb the steep ascent even unto the summit of the arch that supports the heavens (ἄκραν ἐπὶ τὴν ὑπουράνιον ἀψίδα); and easy is that ascent for the chariots of the gods, for they are well-balanced and well-reined; but for the others it is hard, by reason of the heaviness of the steed of wickedness, which pulls down his driver with his weight, except that the driver have schooled him well. And now there awaits the soul the extreme of her toil and struggling. For the souls that are called immortal, so soon as they are at the summit, come forth and stand upon the back of the world: and straightaway the revolving heaven carries them around, and they look upon the regions without.

trans. Hackforth 1952, with modifications.

Admittedly, this Platonic passage is not that helpful for the enigmatic term αὐτοτράπεζοι. Perhaps it is a reference to the gods somehow drawing fiery sustenance from the sun, and thus “sharing the same table,” comparable to Heraclitus, where the stars, like the sun, are fed off of the emanations or *anathumiata* of the sea and

87. The connection between Empedocles and the *Phaedrus* myth was well known to ancient Platonists, who often run the two authors together: see n.62 above and the modern refs. in n.12. At the end of *De exilio*, within a medley of Empedoclean quotations Plutarch cites *Phaedrus* 250c, ὁσπρέου τρόπον δεδευμένον. Following that lead, many moderns have noted similarities between the *Phaedrus* myth and Empedocles, and Diels-Kranz even prints *Phaedrus* 248cd as an “echo” of B 115 on the fall of the *daimon*. For recent general discussions of the myth and its imagery, Laks 2005 and more widely Hackforth 1952, De Vries 1969, Rowe 1986, Cairns 2013. Against any temptation to dismiss the *Phaedrus* myth as mere literary ornament, I note that in the *Timaeus* 41e–42a, very much as in B 115, the incarnation of all immortal souls, after they have been first shown their true star-homes, is referred back to necessity. But the case is complicated because the *Phaedrus* myth also has undeniable connections to Parmenides, the image of the chariot of the soul especially. My own opinion is that Plato combines and alludes to both of these “Pythagorean” predecessors.

lower regions. Alternatively, it may denote that the star-gods are all on the same “plain” or again that they do not need food.<sup>88</sup> In other respects, however, Plato’s depiction of the rise of the souls of the gods, those souls called ἄθανάτοι, onto the outer vault of the heaven, and their easy ride around the circumference once there, presents a very close structural parallel to Empedocles’ cosmos, assuming a daily rotation of the star-studded firmament, pushed along by the swift motion of the *aither* (B 38.4 and A 31).

### CONCLUSION

This study has limited itself to the positive case for a three-level cosmic-eschatological scheme in Empedocles: life in earthly Hades, a happier “daimonic” life in the atmosphere, and, for a select elite, final passage to astral divinity. In keeping to that aim, I have passed over many problems and potential objections that could only have been explored at much greater length and complication. My hope is that this study can help open up new possibilities; it does not aspire to be the last word on its topic.

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88. This is implied by the denials of organs of B 134, and has parallels in Philolaus and the world-soul of the *Timaeus*. Philolaus DK 44 A 20 mentions moon animals who do not produce excrement. For a survey of fire animals in Aristotle, see Macfarlane 2013. For Heraclitus on the food of the sun and stars, see Marcovich 1967 section 61, or section VII of Mouraviev 2011 and compare Lucretius *DRN* 5.525. On Heraclitean soul, see Betegh 2013. Back within Plato, the plain and “soul” food of the *Phaedrus* (248bc) certainly do come to mind; see B 121 with comments by Hierocles *Commentary On the Carmen Aureum* 24.2–3. For that and other passages, all translated, see Inwood 2001, Contexts 94–96.



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